

2013 End-of-Year Camp Meeting

Sermon

By

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Title:

A Faithful God in An Uncertain World

"Jesus Christ, the same Yesterday, Today and Forever"

Golden Text:

Ps 90:1-2

¹ LORD, Thou hast been our dwelling place in all generations.

² Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever Thou hadst formed the earth and the world, even from everlasting to everlasting, Thou art God.

As the secular year 2013 comes to an end, we have a lot to be thankful for. Thankful for the gift of life, thankful for the abundance of blessings, and for the hand of Providence that has guided us through the storm, through the valley and through the wilderness. Let our soul swell with gratitude to God for His mercy and deliverance:

¹ Bless the LORD, O my soul: and all that is within me, bless His holy name.

² Bless the LORD, O my soul, and forget not all His benefits:

³ Who forgiveth all thine iniquities; who healeth all thy diseases;

⁴ Who redeemeth thy life from destruction; who crowneth thee with lovingkindness and tender mercies;

⁵ Who satisfieth thy mouth with good things; so that thy youth is renewed like the eagle's (Ps 103:1-5).

Indeed, it's He who "holdeth our soul in life, and suffereth not our feet to be moved" (Ps 66:9). He has brought us safely to the end of year 2013.

Year 2014 is upon us. But our God is still the same. The New Year is not going to be an atypical year, a stress-free year; a year in which nothing will ever hurt!

A year is merely a segment of time sectioned off from an otherwise unbroken continuum of time. The calendar year is reckoned to be equivalent to the time it takes for the earth to go round the sun. Otherwise time keeps moving forward in a seemingly never-ending cycle of night and day and weeks and months.

A new year is like any other year. There will be sweat moments and there will be sad moments; there will be mountains to climb and valleys to descend; rivers to cross and hills to scale. But through them all, let's remember that "we are more than conquerors through Him that loved us" (Rom. 8:37). The year 2014, like every other year, possesses the mystique of the unknown. But our God remains God. He will see us through every difficulty and crisis. He is our unchanging Rock of salvation; He is our life-saver on the undulating sea of life; indeed, our lifeline out of every danger. His faithfulness endures forever!

The Almighty is our Dwelling-place

As the Psalmist put it, "LORD, Thou has been our dwelling place in all generations". That is to say, our destinies are not determined by any particular years, so-called lucky and unlucky years. The key to our survival and wellbeing is God Almighty. We are anchored to Him. We live in Him. We live in the power of His might and under the shadow of His wings. He's our pillar of strength as we enter the New Year.

When the storms of life rage and threaten to ruin us, He will quieten the storms. The sudden outbreak of crises will not overwhelm us. He assures us in Prov. 3:25-26:

²⁵ Be not afraid of sudden fear, neither of the desolation of the wicked, when it cometh.

²⁶ For the LORD shall be thy confidence, and shall keep thy foot from being taken.

There is a general state of panic fueled by the destruction of the wicked, a destruction visible to all in their gory ugliness. But the command is, "do not be afraid". We should trust the LORD to keep us out of harm's way.

Then when we hit a dead end similar to how the Red Sea suddenly stopped the forward march of the Israelites and there's no turning back too because our enemies are in pursuit, we should know that our mighty God is never at His wits' end. He will make a way in the sea where there is no way and drown and bury our oppressors once-and-for-all in the bottom of the sea!

Then when we come up against a brick wall which threatens to keep us from our inheritance, our God will repeat His Jericho miracle—and tear it down!

As He assured the children of Israel in the desert, His presence will go with us in 2014 and give us rest (Ex. 33:14). He is not going to forsake us. Never! He's faithful, and it's against His nature to forsake us. We are His inheritance:

1 Sam. 12:22

For the LORD will not forsake His people for His great name's sake: because it hath pleased the LORD to make you His people.

Deut 7:9

Know therefore that the LORD thy God, He is God, the faithful God, which keepeth covenant and mercy with them that love Him and keep His commandments to a thousand generations.

His Redemption is for the Asking

Yahweh God is our Redeemer and therefore we should live everyday of our lives in expectation of His mercy. We must not lean on our own understanding but trust in Him for His redemption (Prov. 3:5).

In Psalm 107, His deliverance of the children of men from their many troubles is celebrated, and we are encouraged to do the same for the deliverance He has performed in our own lives and what He will do this coming year and beyond. Indeed, many of the crisis situations from which people as real as us were delivered are situations we can readily identify with. As He did for them so He will do for us if only we will do as they did in their hour of trouble--Cry out to Him!

The Psalmist tells their story and the redemption of the Almighty in song:

¹ O give thanks unto the LORD, for He is good: for His mercy endureth for ever.

² Let the redeemed of the LORD say so, whom He hath redeemed from the hand of the enemy;

³ And gathered them out of the lands, from the east, and from the west, from the north, and from the south.

⁴ They wandered in the wilderness in a solitary way; they found no city to dwell in.

⁵ Hungry and thirsty, their soul fainted in them.

⁶ Then they cried unto the LORD in their trouble, and He delivered them out of their distresses.

⁷ And He led them forth by the right way, that they might go to a city of habitation (Ps 107:1-7).

Our God deserves all thanks because "He is good" and has done us good; we have experienced His goodness and continue to experience it. All because "His mercy endureth forever"! His ever active mercy means the blessings of His goodness will continue to flow into our lives. We can't speak for others, but we as "the redeemed of the LORD" know deep within our souls His kindness towards us. We have benefitted from His goodness, and it's time to speak out and tell others about it. From a grateful heart, we testify of all the good things He has done for us.

We are "the redeemed of the LORD". We are no longer under the oppression of the enemy of all mankind, Satan. On the cross of Calvary, Christ broke the power of His oppression and set us free. And He has gathered us from different families and tribes and nations and made us one people in Him (Eph. 2:11-19). We are headed for the heavenly city of Jerusalem where He will wipe all tears from our eyes, "and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away" (Heb. 13:14; Rev. 21:4).

So then, we are "strangers and pilgrims" on earth (1 Pet. 2:11; Ps 119:19). Naturally, we don't know our way around; we are not worldly-wise. We wander about in life to a point where our lives seem to have lost all direction. Sometimes, we appear to have even lost control of our own lives. Despair sets in, and we seem not to know what to do with our own lives. We are stuck in a rut, merely existing! We barely have enough to eat and we can't satisfy the daily needs of our children. Meanwhile, the bills keep mounting--the rent, the school fess, the utilities. Yet we can't land a job, and when we land one, we can't hold it down. The hardship is beyond our power to overcome!

This is the time to cry unto the LORD in prayer, and He will bring direction and order to our lives. He will lead us by "the right way" and cause us to settle down. Let's commit our way to the LORD in year 2014, and we will never lose our way. It's He who guides the blind in the light of His faithfulness. He says in Isa. 42:16:

And I will bring the blind by a way that they knew not; I will lead them in paths that they have not known: I will make darkness light before them, and crooked things straight. These things will I do unto them, and not forsake them.

As His Word is true, He will surely listen to our cry and set us on the path of peace and salvation (Ps 37:23; Jer. 10:23) which shines more and more until the full light of Christ's return:

But the path of the just is as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day (Prov. 4:18).

Because His mercy endures forever and so His goodness, we never get to bring our praises to an end. He has performed another great redemption work:

Ps 107:8-14

⁸ Oh that men would praise the LORD for His goodness, and for His wonderful works to the children of men!

⁹ For He satisfieth the longing soul, and filleth the hungry soul with goodness.

¹⁰ Such as sit in darkness and in the shadow of death, being bound in affliction and iron;

¹¹ Because they rebelled against the words of God, and contemned the counsel of the most High:

¹² Therefore He brought down their heart with labour; they fell down, and there was none to help.

¹³ Then they cried unto the LORD in their trouble, and He saved them out of their distresses.

¹⁴ He brought them out of darkness and the shadow of death, and brake their bands in sunder.

We are brimming with life and goodness. He has satisfied our longing souls. We lift up our voices in His praise for His wonderful works in our lives. He has turned our lives around. We previously sat in pitch darkness, even in the shadow of death, weighed down with afflictions and without help, but He broke our chains asunder when we cried to Him prayer, although we had not been loyal to Him.

I do not wish it for you, that you fall into disobedience. I encourage you to stay faithful; I pray that you overcome sin and the devil everyday of your life. I pray that you wise up to the devices of the enemy (2 Cor. 2:11). Nevertheless, the sly old serpent is still in active business, and he is on his prowl "seeking whom he may devour" (1 Pet. 5:8).

God forbid, but if it happens that you are caught in the devil's web in a moment of weakness and are "overtaken in a sin" (Gal. 6:1), don't hesitate to go down on your knees in prayer. His faithfulness extends to forgiving the contrite and the repentant (1 John 1:9). He will forgive and restore (2 Chron. 7:14). His word is that "He that covereth his sins shall not prosper: but whoso confesseth and forsaketh them shall have mercy" (Prov. 28:13).

His mercy which you have received on renouncing your sins will release His power of redemption into your life and deliver you from all the distress and pain your disobedience caused you. He will set you free to enjoy life in Him under His favour and goodwill.

His redemption work is not yet done!

Ps 107:15-20

¹⁵ Oh that men would praise the LORD for his goodness, and for his wonderful works to the children of men!

¹⁶ For he hath broken the gates of brass, and cut the bars of iron in sunder.

¹⁷ Fools because of their transgression, and because of their iniquities, are afflicted.

¹⁸ Their soul abhorreth all manner of meat; and they draw near unto the gates of death.

¹⁹ Then they cry unto the LORD in their trouble, and He saveth them out of their distresses.

²⁰ He sent His word, and healed them, and delivered them from their destructions.

He mounted a special rescue operation for us. We were locked behind iron bars, hemmed in and shackled. There was no way of escape. It's a graphic metaphor for a disease that came to us on a permanent visit, determined to deliver us to death! Sin might have brought it on us because, for a moment, we foolishly thought that we could do without God or it might have been an attack of evil forces. Whatever occasioned it, our situation was a dreadful one. We lost all appetite, and each day brought us closer and closer to death. Then we cried to the LORD and He sent His word and healed our disease.

Sickness is undesirable, but it's part of this sad state of affairs in this world of sin. I was careful to say "this world of sin". Sickness is not the lot of the believer to whom God has sent His Word, making him a citizen of heaven, though he lives in the world (John 17:16; Phil. 3:20). The Word He sent is the Lord Jesus Christ (John 1:1-4, 14) " Who His own self bare our sins in His own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed" (1 Pet. 2:24).

The Lord took away all our diseases when He was scourged at the time of His crucifixion, with the iron-studded whip even lacerating His flesh. What He took away in His body cannot remain in our bodies. So don't be laid low by sickness this coming year, at the least sign of sickness, cry out to Jesus and enforce the verdict of Calvary: "you were healed". His word of healing is ever efficacious.

Our redemption song continues:

Ps 107:21-30

²¹ Oh that men would praise the LORD for his goodness, and for his wonderful works to the children of men!

²² And let them sacrifice the sacrifices of thanksgiving, and declare His works with rejoicing.

²³ They that go down to the sea in ships, that do business in great waters;

²⁴ These see the works of the LORD, and His wonders in the deep.

²⁵ For He commandeth, and raiseth the stormy wind, which lifteth up the waves thereof.

²⁶ They mount up to the heaven, they go down again to the depths: their soul is melted because of trouble.

²⁷ They reel to and fro, and stagger like a drunken man, and are at their wits' end.

²⁸ Then they cry unto the LORD in their trouble, and he bringeth them out of their distresses.

²⁹ He maketh the storm a calm, so that the waves thereof are still.

³⁰ Then are they glad because they be quiet; so He bringeth them unto their desired haven.

His wonderful works of redemption increase in wonder deserving thanksgiving offerings with jubilation and shouts of joy. Let the world hear us praise our God; let it ring with our praises. What He has done this time round is absolutely mind-blowing!

It's the real sea, and the men make a living as sailors. They transport goods and sometimes passengers across seas and oceans, and the experience is both exhilarating and frightening. They encounter captivating sea creatures like the dolphin, the shark, octopus, etc. In the morning, they wake up to the bright rays of the sun glistening on the watery surface of the sea. When the sun sets, its shimmering glow bid them good night. The vast boundless sea is itself awe-inspiring and set them thinking how great and wonderful God is.

But the sea can suddenly turn violent as windstorms lash at it creating waves that travel as high as heaven and then come plunging back into the sea, down to the very depths! The sea is in a rage, and the ship, which has had a calm sail until now, is the hapless victim. The ship is on a

dangerous rollercoaster ride on the sea, bobbing up and down while reeling from side to side under the buffeting storm.

The sailors are dead men, but they are at their wits' end. They can't do a thing about their dangerous situation and certain death in the sea.

The text says God called forth the stormy wind and instigated the waves. What the text really means is that God could have stopped the storm and the waves, but He gave free rein to those 'forces of nature' so He could demonstrate His power over them. This is exactly what He does when the petrified seafarers cry out to Him. He calms the storm and quietens the waves. The sailors escape by the skin of their teeth--and that by the grace and intervention of God.

They now breathe easily again and smiles return to their contorted faces. The good Lord guides them and brings them safely to their destination.

Ours is not the real sea but the turbulent sea of people (Rev. 17:15; Luke 21:25). Like the experience of real sailors at sea, our life experiences can also be exciting and frightening at the same time. Life can be beautiful when you are with the right people. Loved ones smile at you; they engage you in hearty conversations. When you are hurting inside, they give you a shoulder to cry on. When you stumble, they help you up. Supportive friends and family share ideas with you and encourage you to put your best foot forward. They want to see you succeed.

Sadly, the sea of people is not always this calm and gentle. It can suddenly turn hostile as people harass you and put impediments in your path of progress. They kick up a storm against you, and it comes falling down on you like a tidal wave!

The whole world seems to be against you, though it's just a determined group of enemies. They are the tempest battering your life. And you are overwhelmed by all their plotting and scheming against you; you are no match for their combined strength. You are a spent force bobbing up and down on the stormy sea of life. You cannot withstand their waves of attacks. You are a drowning man! It's time to lift up a cry of help to God in heaven. The experience is a terrain David knows well. He prays in Ps 69:

¹ Save me, O God; for the waters are come in unto my soul.

² I sink in deep mire, where there is no standing: I am come into deep waters, where the floods overflow me.

³ I am weary of my crying: my throat is dried: mine eyes fail while I wait for my God.

⁴ They that hate me without a cause are more than the hairs of mine head: they that would destroy me, being mine enemies wrongfully, are mighty: then I restored that which I took not away.

⁵ O God, Thou knowest my foolishness; and my sins are not hid from thee.

⁶ Let not them that wait on Thee, O Lord GOD of hosts, be ashamed for my sake: let not those that seek Thee be confounded for my sake, O God of Israel.

⁷ Because for thy sake I have borne reproach; shame hath covered my face.

⁸ I am become a stranger unto my brethren, and an alien unto my mother's children (Ps 69:1-8).

A troop of enemies, including some of his own close relatives, seek and plot his destruction, not because he has hurt or offended them but out of sheer hatred. They are a raging sea of wicked people hell-bent on destroying him but His help is God.

In this New Year 2014, "When the enemy shall come in like a flood" and you can't match their power, remember that there is One who can both match and overcome the enemy. His assurance is that, "The Spirit of the LORD shall lift up a standard against him" (Isa. 59:19). Jeremiah spoke of Him:

¹⁰ For I heard the defaming of many, fear on every side. Report, say they, and we will report it. All my familiars watched for my halting, saying, Peradventure he will be enticed, and we shall prevail against him, and we shall take our revenge on him.

¹¹ But the LORD is with me as a mighty terrible one: therefore my persecutors shall stumble, and they shall not prevail: they shall be greatly ashamed; for they shall not prosper: their everlasting confusion shall never be forgotten (Jer. 20:10-11).

With Him by your side, the raging sea of enemies that come against you will calm down with just a wave of His hand:

Mark 4:36-41

³⁶ And when they had sent away the multitude, they took Him even as He was in the ship. And there were also with Him other little ships.

³⁷ And there arose a great storm of wind, and the waves beat into the ship, so that it was now full.

³⁸ And He was in the hinder part of the ship, asleep on a pillow: and they awake Him, and say unto Him, Master, carest thou not that we perish?

³⁹ And He arose, and rebuked the wind, and said unto the sea, Peace, be still. And the wind ceased, and there was a great calm.

⁴⁰ And He said unto them, Why are ye so fearful? how is it that ye have no faith?

⁴¹ And they feared exceedingly, and said one to another, What manner of man is this, that even the wind and the sea obey Him?

You are not in the boat alone. You are with Christ, the calmer of sea waves. So do remember to wake Him up in prayer. Don't be confused by all the whizzing rage of the storm. Have the presence of mind to call on Him; have the faith to wake Him up. He will still the gathering storms of aggression (Ps. 59 3-4, 6) and say to the sea of enemies in tumult, "Peace, be still". And there shall be a great calm. The wind and the sea obey him.

He will guide you away from their traps, through their minefield of destruction, to a destination of peace. The "proud waters" of the enemy shall not flood your soul. The expression "proud waters" was used by King David to describe the massed hordes of enemies from whose wrath

and conspiracies the LORD delivered him. He praises the LORD in Ps 124, prodding the people of God to sing along with him:

- ¹ If it had not been the LORD who was on our side, now may Israel say;
- ² If it had not been the LORD who was on our side, when men rose up against us:
- ³ Then they had swallowed us up quick, when their wrath was kindled against us:
- ⁴ Then the waters had overwhelmed us, the stream had gone over our soul:
- ⁵ Then the proud waters had gone over our soul.
- ⁶ Blessed be the LORD, who hath not given us as a prey to their teeth.
- ⁷ Our soul is escaped as a bird out of the snare of the fowlers: the snare is broken, and we are escaped.
- ⁸ Our help is in the name of the LORD, who made heaven and earth.

We have now reached the last stanza of our redemption poem:

Ps 107:31-43

- ³¹ Oh that men would praise the LORD for His goodness, and for His wonderful works to the children of men!
- ³² Let them exalt Him also in the congregation of the people, and praise Him in the assembly of the elders.
- ³³ He turneth rivers into a wilderness, and the watersprings into dry ground;
- ³⁴ A fruitful land into barrenness, for the wickedness of them that dwell therein.
- ³⁵ He turneth the wilderness into a standing water, and dry ground into watersprings.
- ³⁶ And there He maketh the hungry to dwell, that they may prepare a city for habitation;
- ³⁷ And sow the fields, and plant vineyards, which may yield fruits of increase.
- ³⁸ He blesseth them also, so that they are multiplied greatly; and suffereth not their cattle to decrease.
- ³⁹ Again, they are minished and brought low through oppression, affliction, and sorrow.
- ⁴⁰ He poureth contempt upon princes, and causeth them to wander in the wilderness, where there is no way.
- ⁴¹ Yet setteth He the poor on high from affliction, and maketh him families like a flock.
- ⁴² The righteous shall see it, and rejoice: and all iniquity shall stop her mouth.
- ⁴³ Whoso is wise, and will observe these things, even they shall understand the lovingkindness of the LORD.

The righteous will not always pester the Lord with this cry, succinctly articulated by the prophet in Jer. 12: "Righteous art thou, O LORD, ... Wherefore doth the way of the wicked prosper? wherefore are all they happy that deal very treacherously?"

He did justice to His own people, and justice that did not just compensate the righteous but punished the wicked. Both ate the fruit of their own doings:

- ¹⁰ Say ye to the righteous, that it shall be well with him: for they shall eat the fruit of their doings.

¹¹ Woe unto the wicked! it shall be ill with him: for the reward of his hands shall be given him (Isa. 30:10-11).

So God destroyed their means of sustenance and wealth. The wicked will not forever enjoy His largesse, if they will not learn righteousness and justice but continue to indulge in evil, injustice, greed and oppression. Their sources of productive wealth will suddenly dry up; He will curse those sources. The evil thoughts and deeds of the wicked will catch up with them.

But the Lord will bless the righteous; He will create the right conditions for their prosperity. He will move the righteous from a position of disadvantage to a position of opportunities. He turns the wilderness into pools of water and the dry ground into springs of water. There, to satisfy the hunger of the righteous and to make them prosperous. Henceforth they will flourish, and the work of their hands will be fruitful.

The rich wicked has changed places with the poor righteous in terms of economic status. But still, the riches of the righteous *nouveau riche* exceed that of the wicked because it's not ill-gotten wealth but the blessing of the LORD and there's nothing to be afraid of: "The blessing of the LORD, it maketh rich, and He addeth no sorrow with it" (Prov. 10:22).

The righteous will also enjoy the good life: live in nice houses, ride in nice cars, and build thriving businesses and companies. And the wealth grows exponentially because God ordains it so. The years of shrinking resources and opportunities will be gone and gone forever.

The righteous won't always be low. Our destiny is to be the head and not the tail--but in God's own time!

And this without a correlating negative effect on the wicked. The wicked swap places with the once oppressed righteous socially. And it will not be of their own doing. Yahweh will pay back the wicked in their own coin; He will humiliate them by subjecting them to suffering and sorrow. If they oppressed any, they shall be oppressed; if they took away unlawfully, it shall be taken away from them (Micah 2:2-4). The wicked will reap what they sowed (Gal. 6:7).

And so will the righteous. God will lift them up from affliction and improve their social standing. They will enjoy upward mobility while the wicked are reduced to living on the fringes of society. The wicked only exalted themselves; they were never promoted. Promotion only comes from God. He addresses the arrogant in Ps 75:5-7:

⁵ Lift not up your horn on high: speak not with a stiff neck.

⁶ For promotion cometh neither from the east, nor from the west, nor from the south.

⁷ But God is the judge: He putteth down one, and setteth up another.

The justice of God is real, and it will be made plain to all. And the rest of the wicked will no more glory in cheating, deceit and injustice. They will live in mortal fear of the seemingly slow but sure justice of God. But "the righteous shall see it, and rejoice".

The key to divine promotion is the inverse of the world's. Humility amounts to promotion in the sight of God. So be humble before the Lord of all this new year. Obey His Word and His instructions of life; pray unceasingly in abject humility and He will lift you up in the sight of all (Jam. 4:10; Ps 37:5-6).

Yahweh will show Himself a just God. The wise will take note and ponder His acts of faithfulness.

This new year, things will happen to you, good and bad things, maybe even terrible things, but those happenings can never overwhelm our God. Don't be timorous; don't be easily frightened. Believe in God Almighty, El Elyon. Place your hopes in Him. Make Him the anchor of your soul--the soul that's so susceptible to fear and worries--and you shall never fall. That's because you dwell in Him. He's your dwelling-place and refuge, your shadow of protection. Under the safety of His wings you shall fear no evil.

The flood may cover the face of the earth, but Yahweh sits as King over the flood waters, wielding supreme power and authority, to give you peace. King David celebrates Him:

The LORD sits enthroned over the flood; the LORD is enthroned as King forever.
The LORD gives strength to His people, the LORD blesses His people with peace (Ps 29:10-11 NIV).

His Promise is True; but Guard against Ingratitude

Yahweh will certainly satisfy the hungry soul with goodness and grant us the victory in all situations. Whatever challenges we face this year, whatever problems we go through, God will prove Himself a deliverer in our lives if we call upon Him. But let's not forget to thank Him and to dedicate our lives to Him each and every day of our blessed life. Our Maker knows our human nature, that we are wont to forget to acknowledge Him when times are good. He warned the Israelites in Deut 8:

Deut 8:11-18

¹¹ Beware that thou forget not the LORD thy God, in not keeping his commandments, and his judgments, and his statutes, which I command thee this day:

¹² Lest when thou hast eaten and art full, and hast built goodly houses, and dwelt therein;

¹³ And when thy herds and thy flocks multiply, and thy silver and thy gold is multiplied, and all that thou hast is multiplied;

¹⁴ Then thine heart be lifted up, and thou forget the LORD thy God, which brought thee forth out of the land of Egypt, from the house of bondage;

¹⁵ Who led thee through that great and terrible wilderness, wherein were fiery serpents, and scorpions, and drought, where there was no water; who brought thee forth water out of the rock of flint;

¹⁶ Who fed thee in the wilderness with manna, which thy fathers knew not, that He might humble thee, and that He might prove thee, to do thee good at thy latter end;

¹⁷ And thou say in thine heart, My power and the might of mine hand hath gotten me this wealth.

¹⁸ But thou shalt remember the LORD thy God: for it is He that giveth thee power to get wealth, that He may establish His covenant which He sware unto thy fathers, as it is this day.

Let's not forget! Our loving Father is going to bless us even more and already has through His Son Jesus. By this time next year, we will again be a people whom the LORD has blessed. Let's not forget to give Him His due. His mercy endureth forever. His faithfulness is our victory and hope.