

## THE LANGUAGE OF DESPAIR

Truly I am not one to say "I told you so", but... Whenever I heard people say they could not wait for 2020 to be over, I kept saying "Careful, 2021 could end up looking like 2020's 'evil twin' ". If we base our outlook on the first few weeks of 2021, we could have a strong argument. The on-going Covid 19 news, the struggle to open Churches, Capital Hill riots, and the discovery of a massive Russian data breach are making for a somewhat dark entry into the New Year. If these are not enough (for a year barely three weeks old), the loss of some very beloved members of our world (including my favorite-Henry Aaron) certainly has placed a haze of uncertainty over the optimism we so long-for after ten months of isolation from loved ones, financial body-blows, and a news cycle hard to rely on. When the world is most in need of hope, all the information outlets seem bent on using 'breaking news' words to lead into stories. I don't know if you feel the same, but the past year's intensity has a "pedal to the metal" sort of feel to it, as if our attempts to catch our breath are hopeless. **I say ENOUGH!!!**

For most of us, a perspective of world-wide calamity doesn't exist. We have tragedies like 9-11, but this event was primarily American. You have to go back to the World Wars, Spanish Flu, Great Depression, and the polio outbreak of the 20<sup>th</sup> century to have this perspective, so few of us do. With all of these events, concerted efforts were made to give people hope and encouragement. The events themselves provided all the gloom and doom on their own. Loved ones dying in large numbers and the advance of Fascism in Europe were enough to scare anyone. Usually in these times, Faith was the conduit for reminding everyone that **GOD** was still in charge and that the eventual outcome would be good. Political and individual moods were effectively bolstered and strengthened by Faith. Today, to some degree, this dynamic has changed...even among the faithful. We say one thing publicly, but inside the feeling is sadness, despair, and fear. This (our relationship with **GOD**) is where we have to focus our attention and away from the headlines that greet us every time we turn on the television or browse internet platforms for news. As a favorite song of mine says, "There's an evil cast around us, but it's **LOVE** that

wrote the Play". I say this primarily because the "full picture" is beyond our vision. Only **GOD** can see and know the outcomes and paths world events take to their conclusion. At the very best, we guess (some moderately informed and most severely misinformed) based on limited perspectives nowhere near the 'vantage' point of our omnipresent, omniscient **Creator**. We live in an age very reluctant to acknowledge this, but we are not **GOD** (despite what Satan wants us to believe) and the overall picture is a design of the **HIS** making. We have tasks but our responsibilities begin and end there. These tasks are unique to us, they are special for those we encounter, and they should express our love for **GOD**, but...we are not in charge. Any attempt to make us think otherwise or to minimize our 'small' efforts down to being insignificant only flow from Evil. The efforts we make are huge and important for those **GOD** has placed in our paths, as are those paths **HE** has placed us in. Knitting all the world's activities together is way beyond our "pay grade". Have you ever had anyone butt into the middle of a conversation or situation, create drama, and then move on to something else? Those involved are left dazed and confused. This is where we are today.

So...what to do. Think of the Apostles after the Crucifixion. The next step, the path forward, the understanding of what just transpired was all a mystery for them. Fear, confusion, sadness. Satan had interrupted the movement they thought they were a part of, but... they stayed together, they prayed, and they Believed. From Friday morning to Sunday morning. Those were the darkest hours in human history. Everything changed on Easter morning. Use this coming **Lent** to meditate on this story and over-lay world events into our story. We are not alone, we have not been abandoned, and ALL things will work for **HIS** Glory. As Christians, we are not of this world, we are only in it for a time. Let's focus on the roles we play in **HIS** plan, the people we encounter along **HIS** way, and make a difference for those who need us most. Leave the results to **HIM**...they are **HIS** responsibility. Have a Blessed and Fruitful Lenten season.

GOD Bless You ALL

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