Psalm 138 February 3, 2019

 **Don’t Quit On Me Now!**

It was a common practice in David’s day for the psalmist to conclude a song of lament (after a time of trouble)….: to conclude a psalm of lament with a vow of ‘thanks…to the Lord. That is the case here.

The psalmist has come to the temple – to give thanks for deliverance from the midst of trouble. [Listen up, O church.]

Deliverance has come. And it is so miraculous in the Psalmist’s eyes…that it exceeds all God has ever done for him. More than that, it is a greater mercy and deliverance…than he has seen God give to others. \*? So, for our author, it is not enough for him to simply call on friends and relatives to join in praise. He goes beyond that; he summons mayors, other religious leaders…and believers from all around) …to “sing the ways of the Lord”. The story of what God has done is good news – *for the whole world.* Let me say that again; the story of what God for Heaven’s people is such great news…that he wants to shout it out! ***Amen!***

Beloved…. We stand on a threshold, friends. It is daunting, yes. It could be intimidating.\* (nod affirmingly) But it is also…thrilling. This….is a miracle season…you and I…are in. We have opportunities now….the faithful here did not have….a score of years ago. (For one, thing, it is probably easier now than in two centuries past….for churches to try something new. That – is a good thing!)

I know you, now. (after a half year) And you know me; we…can do anything together. **I believe that**…in every cubic millimeter of my heart! I believe this city….is ready for renaissance…if ever a people were!

 To look on the bright side, to apprehend the *portent*….the possibilities…. It’s like a dream!!

 ~ ~ ~ ☺ (speaking of which) Some years back, but not many, I had a dream one night (which played directly upon this particular passage) In my dream (a strange, incredible dream full of detail and complexity. Plot twists and turns galore… Hold on to your imagination!)

I was in college, in a law class. Dr. Hoover Fisher, my Men’s Glee Club Director from Oklahoma State University was *somehow*…the professor of this law class. And towards the end of the semester, deep in the heart of winter (it was snowing outside our brick classroom building as I lived this…very vivid dream) : one night….three students from our class…were arrested. For three separate incidents around the world.

My dream took on a kind of nightmare quality for the first short while..as the first student, who had been picked up by UN forces in Afghanistan…was put on international trial for the death of a relief worker. It turned out…reality was the other way around. True, he had taken a truckload of food intended to help the starving people of Kabul…but the shipment itself, it turned out, had previously been hijacked by Taliban terrorists to starve their fellow Muslims in that ‘declared safe enclave’. The student had really risked his own life…to *save a town*…hit by famine. The UN worker who died in this hijacking (whom my classmate had been accused of killing) had been actually aiding the student and was hit by thugs in a crossfire as the two of them tried to escape. My classmate was innocent. But for three days….the world was ready to hang him….until the tyruth came out.

 The second student...was also on trial for his life, accused of dumping plutonium super-toxins into the Chicago River right before Christmas. Actually, he had successfully stopped…the company…that was doing it. But he had been accused by company officials when police showed up and he had the barrels in his possession. The media had a hey-day. Until finally they ended up with egg on their face and my classmate was exonerated by a documentary video.

 Still…the dream…went on*…. (I know….?)*

The third student was an unpopular, acne faced, sissy…twenty year old…that I was defending in court (all the students had asked for and been assigned other students from our law class to defend them; I told you it was bizarre…) And it turned out, as he confided to me, he was actually innocent…of kidnapping…the President of the United States. (this was about a decade ago) This acquaintance of mine…had somehow learned that the National Security Director had a plot to kill the President and overthrow the country, so sure was the NSA Director in his rabid mind…the government was taking us to disaster.

 So my classmate had actually saved the President…(with the kidnapping)…because ….he loved him. And it turned out….we all finally found out why. He was the President’s son, although no one knew it, until it came out in court. He was an illegitimate son…it turned out. [Do you see how this is falling into place? Can you think of another ‘illegitimate son’…famous at Christmas? And we too… We will be considered by some neighbors no doubt….illegitimate…for our faith. Especially when we take a bold leap…in faith.

 Finally, in the dream, as we in the class slowly learned the true nature of these incidents (and you can imagine…the nation and world spotlight…that had begun to shine on us 100 students and our one professor…) : as we met for class each day….this nightmare…slowly eased….and turned into a fascinating ☺, nation gripping, world renowned….drama. And cameras…followed our professor’s every word.

That morning in class, that I saw in my dream, Dr. Fisher had his back to us…and was writing at the blackboard. ‘Another thing that had helped us student through this chaos…was learning that, when our classmates were arrested, they would only give strange, Biblical names. They were arrested and charged…under the names “Hope, Charity, and Love.”

 And as Dr. Fisher continued deciphering the charges, on the board in front of the class….taking the first words…from each police blotter…in each of the three cases…from each of the three cities in where the indictments had been filed…(Washington, D.C., Chicago, and Kabul, Afghanistan)…and as he was encrypting them up on the board in colored chalk…a full sentence began to emerge.

CNN, CBS, ABC, NBC, Fox and Time and Newsweek and a hundred other media people were up behind us…clicking away, capturing every movement on the board. All of us students were relaxed by now, chatting and watching the scene unfold…before class. We had gotten wind…pretty much guessed…there would be a reason for these cataclysmic events…unfolding….in this coded…explanation. But so far, no one in the world…had figured it out.

 Then, as the planet held its corporate breath, my client, the third student…pranced into the room, and knelt down in front of me. He was on cloud ten. He’d been sleeping for twenty hours to catch up from a week without sleep….and behind bars, on trial….now…escorted by the Secret Service. (The president, thankful that he, his son, and the government were safe…decided to make a clean break of it and tell the nation, this was indeed his son, in whom he was well pleased.) So now my new friend knelt on the floor in front of the first row of desks where I was sitting and whispered in my ear, “Jeff, I did it! I’ve landed the lead role in the best, new Broadway musical. I’m leaving now for New York!” (It turned out he was a law major but a music minor, and his heart was really in performing…and now..he could do it.) Everyone’s dream….had come true.

 ….Meanwhile….the sentence everyone was waiting for…finally came into view.

 It read….in bright colors of red, and green….

**“*These…three….are Christmas*: Hope, Love, and Charity.”**

 About that time I woke up and realized the Holy Ghost had helped me dream a vision…that made MAGNIFICENT…this word…of God.

 …Beloved, hold on to your dreams…for God is not finished with us yet!

 Amen.