

Perilous Times Primer # 46

July 22, 2022

Are You Ready to Go Down?

We (Nan and I) had an interesting readiness test on our flight back from Montana camp. I'll explain below.

Camp News

The Youth Camp outside of Kalispell, Montana was such a great encouragement. Doug and Kristy Wray, along with a hard-working team in the kitchen, did a great job organizing and leading the whole venture. We had as fine a group of young people as I have ever seen at any camp. They were interested, engaged, and very interactive. We had to add some sessions for questions and answers to feed their interest and hunger for answers to biblical/spiritual questions.

The camp had a great team assembled for the smooth running of all services and activities. Roger Thiele brought a good number from Curlew, Washington, which included the music leaders, Dan Quinzel and his team. Matt and Hallie Becker also came with a group from Norway, Iowa.

Please keep the Iowa crew and Prairie View Community Church in prayer as they will be hosting their own youth camp at the end of this week.

Fairview Bible Church in Erie, PA will be hosting their annual youth camp, July 25–30. Please pray for them as well.

Final Exam Time

Sometimes life gives us a preview of the final exam. As we took off for home, I pulled my hat down over my eyes and went to sleep. Flights home usually come after much travel, ministry, and late nights. Soon, I was in a deep sleep. We were at a cruise altitude of 30,000 feet—with no turbulence.

Suddenly, I was brought out of deep sleep by an obviously panicked shout, "*There is a fire!*" I woke up and Nan said, "*There is some kind of emergency.*" I responded, "*It's a fire.*" The steward was moving rapidly toward the front, very agitated, and got on the phone to the pilot.

I told Nan to prepare to go down and to pray while I gave the Gospel. I began preparing in my mind the brief message I would give, "The plane is on fire, and we are going down. You only have a few moments to make the greatest decision of your lives, to place your trust in the Lord Jesus Christ and to receive eternal life ..." followed by an explanation of John 3:16, until we hit the ground. Just then I saw the steward break into a smile, shaking his head, and motioning to the stewardess at the back that all was well. "*False alarm.*"

We thanked God for the news, but also for the test. People we have related this to always asked the same question, *“Were you scared?”* Both Nan and I have said the same thing, *“there was an obvious adrenalin rush, but then almost a serene sense of finality, as if, this is what God had planned for us.”* I remember thinking, “you have been on thousands of flights, and always prepared for this. Now it is real.”

I share this little incident with you all to remind each of us: that day will surely come (barring the Rapture). Are we truly prepared for that day? Is our soul at peace with the day of our final departure from this life? We need to seriously consider, and answer, these questions. Because we are not truly ready to live, until we are ready to die. If we really believe that God has a plan for our lives, we also believe that He has numbered our days, and has planned the time and manner of our departure. And that plan is perfect.

For the believer, death is but a moment of transition, from this broken life into the fullness of all that God intended life to be. Paul writes about that transition, as an exhilarating experience, and the moment of our ultimate victory.

“For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. So, when this corruptible has put on incorruption, and this mortal has put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, ‘Death is swallowed up in victory’ ... But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.”
1 Corinthians 15:53–54, 57

I pray that we all will live daily in such a state of trust, that when that day comes for us, we will be *“... steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that [our] labor is not in vain in the Lord”* (1 Cor. 15:58).

For the victory,
Gene