

Greetings to those who are committed to the King and his Kingdom,

SCRIPTURE:

Psalm 46: 9-10 (MSG) – Larger reading: Psalm 46:5-11

“Remember your history, your long and rich history. I am God, the only God you've had or ever will have - incomparable, irreplaceable - From the very beginning telling you what the ending will be, All along letting you in on what is going to happen, Assuring you, 'I'm in this for the long haul, I'll do exactly what I set out to do,'”

STORY:

On the front porch of his little country store in Illinois, Abraham Lincoln and Berry, his partner, stood. Business was all gone, and Berry asked, "How much longer can we keep this going?" Lincoln answered, "It looks as if our business has just about winked out." Then he continued, "You know, I wouldn't mind so much if I could just do what I want to do. I want to study law. I wouldn't mind so much if we could sell everything we've got and pay all our bills and have just enough left over to buy one book--Blackstone's Commentary on English Law, but I guess I can't." A strange-looking wagon was coming up the road. The driver angled it up close to the store porch, then looked at Lincoln and said, "I'm trying to move my family out west, and I'm out of money. I've got a good barrel here that I could sell for fifty cents." Abraham Lincoln's eyes went along the wagon and came to the wife looking at him pleadingly, face thin and emaciated. Lincoln ran his hand into his pocket and took out, according to him, "the last fifty cents I had" and said, "I reckon I could use a good barrel." All day long the barrel sat on the porch of that store. Berry kept chiding Lincoln about it. Late in the evening Lincoln walked out and looked down into the barrel. He saw something in the bottom of it, papers that he hadn't noticed before. His long arms went down into the barrel and, as he fumbled around, he hit something solid. He pulled out a book and stood petrified: it was Blackstone's Commentary on English Law. Lincoln later wrote, "I stood there holding the book and looking up toward the heavens. There came a deep impression on me that God had something for me to do and He was showing he now that I had to get ready for it. Why this miracle otherwise?"

REFLECTION:

The providence of God is obvious, but usually not until after the fact. We seldom ever notice it when we are in the midst of it. We just take life as it comes to us. We make our prayers. Offer up our concerns, wishes, and desires. And God answers ... sometimes, as in Lincoln's case ... much larger and more unusual than we can ever imagine.

When it seems that all is lost and we are about to take our last breath ... there is God. When we think that some how life has simply passed us by ... there is God. When we have run out of answers and hope seems like nothing more than a lost dream ... there is God.

There is God showing us the way. There is God pointing in the direction of his answers. There is God making it plain which direction we should take. There is God asking us to take the next step ... out into the darkness and the unknown ... but there God is pointing the way.

And we, frightened though we be, wanting desperately to step into his future, but we hesitate because we have failed to remember God's history in life in general, in the life of Israel and in our own personal life.

Our answer just might be at the bottom of a barrel ...

QUOTE:

"God schedules a birthday, not man." – Robert A. Bradley

PRAYER:

Our feet are posed to take that next step. We know you are directing to move forward with you. We pause because we are just not sure. Help us not to miss the great opportunities that lay just out of our reach, but not out of our vision ... even it means fishing something out of the bottom of the barrel.

And the faith journey continues, Pastor Jim
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