

“Strange Times”

Seriously, has anyone lived in stranger times in this country? Now I have been living for near bouts x#*x years and while I am still a spring chicken compared to some, I am considered an old guy by many others. I guess by the time you get grandchildren and enjoy driving an eighteen year old Regal Buick, which my daughter Addie Lee, when she first laid eyes on it years ago, proclaimed... “Oh my gosh Diddy, that is an ole man car,” and has pretty much hid herself every time I force her to go anywhere in it...yep, by the time you have grands and Buick Regals in your life you are seen as old whether you feel that way or not. And that has been rather strange to me, cause I feel like I’m forty and I look like I’m thirty (no comment please, Sheila), or something like that, and yet in reality, I’m over the hill and loving every minute of it. Yep, strange times for sure!

I remember not too many years ago I was driving ragtop Jeeps, sporty VW Karmann Gias, and I was water skiing, scuba diving, sailing, hiking the Appalachian with forty pounds of stuff in a ruck sack on my back, riding my road bike 65 miles in a day and coming home to the squeals and delight of four little rug rats. And now it’s Buick Regals and all the aches and pains every morning that comes with a lifetime of living. Yep, these are strange times indeed!

Now, back to the original question, “Has anyone lived in stranger times?” I am quite sure that folks in my cohort who have been off to war, or lived through the depression era or survived other episodes that come with life, have lived through tougher times, but has anyone lived through “stranger times?” I think you know what I mean. Our country, indeed the world, has been living in weirdness for nearly eight months now. When have you ever remembered receiving such toxic information about the pending pandemic and yet heard absolutely no consistent message from anyone as to how to best deal with it. I mean...wear masks...wait no, masks aren’t essential, or maybe they are, so wear a mask and a face shield, or not...clean every surface constantly, or well, it’s doubtful that much of this virus will be spread that way, but who knows, clean it anyway...stay six feet apart, unless you are protesting then the virus suddenly doesn’t spread in a protest...get on a plane with a mask, no don’t get on a plane for any reason, even with a mask...shut the schools down, or maybe, for the sake of children’s mental health and educational needs, allow in-person class room interaction...or maybe just two days a week in-person and the rest on-line at home...use existing drugs like Hydroxyclozoquine...never mind, outlaw that drug cause the President’s using it...you are safe from the virus in a protest, but not at a football game or in a voting booth...you can go to an abortion clinic, but you can’t go to church...yada, yada, yada!

See what I mean! “Crazy times” is probably the term I have heard the most during these days of the pandemic. Now if you or a loved one has suffered with Covid, then you will say

with certainty that these are dangerous times, yes, even deadly times, as many have suffered and died from the virus. But that in itself makes these “strange times,” cause while the sickness is so very real and deadly, especially to our elderly or physically vulnerable population, there seems to be two virus’ at work at the same time, the deadly one and the one being utilized as a political football. All this bizarreness makes these strange times indeed.

In fact, I hear folks say that everything has changed now, nothing is the same and nothing will ever be the same again. And I feel that same way at times, as work and ministry have changed, families have had to adjust, especially families with school age children, church has become strange and non-interactive, but now all this strangeness of church and family and life in general is becoming normal. Yes, these are strange times and yes, everything has changed.

Or maybe not! In the midst of the pandemic, now that eight months has passed, I would agree that “much” has changed, but I would argue against the thought that “all” has changed. For instance, in the midst of the craziness, I planted a garden for the gazillionth time in my life. And because of the pandemic, many others planted a garden for the first time. And you know what, my garden grew and grew and grew to the point, that of all the gardens I have ever had, this years’ garden was the most beautiful and productive. I planted, God watered and gave the increase, and Kim put up massive amounts of glorious vegetables, canning and freezing them, so that now our freezers are slap full and we had plenty to share, right Scott! I took Scott Smith a bag of tomatoes every Monday cause he lives on tomato sandwiches every summer. Thank you Lord for your bounty and blessing in the midst of a pandemic!

Yep, the sun came up every day and set with glorious regularity daily. God sent the rains with perfect timing. The bass were biting, the picnics with the family were as awesome as always, the summer heat was unbearable as usual, days were short when the pandemic hit, they got long and hot and humid as expected, and now the days are getting shorter again, just like they have since the dawn of time. The acorns and persimmons are hanging on the trees and this morning I walked out and it was a glorious 68 degrees with a slight breeze, all of which points to the fact that the seasons come and go with regularity and the fall hunting season is upon us, with dove season just two weeks away...yeehaw!

But with college football “iffy” and with HarvestFest cancelled, it’s just another indication that while man’s plans are often thwarted, Scripture tells us that God’s plans never are (Job 42:2). So, yes, these are strange times indeed, unlike any we may have lived through, but, God has everything moving just as He desires, which makes these strange times bearable and even hopeful, that this old world is winding down just as God’s Word said it would. Our hope and trust should be with God and never man, who often, as seen in this pandemic and these strange times, is clueless.

Yes indeed, in these strange times, we see all of man's plans changing, but none of God's, cause He and His Word never do! And in strange times, I'll take great comfort and place my faith in an unchanging God who, like always in the past and will forever more in the future, have everything under His control. And believing that makes these strange times just a bit less strange!