

Situation Hopeless (Not!)

Joe Slater

Put yourself in their place. You have been hauled off as captives to a foreign land hundreds of miles from your home and separated by a burning desert. How will you ever get back? And what is there to go back to? Your capital city is a heap of smoldering ruins. Most of the population has perished; few of them received so much as a decent burial.

Such was the plight of the Jews in the 6th century BC. And though their condition was the result of their own stubborn sinfulness, who can fault them for feeling hopeless?

Truth be told, however, they were not without hope! Long before their captivity, God told them they would be restored (see Isaiah 52). He even named the king (Cyrus) whose birth would not occur for well over a century, and who would issue the decree permitting the captives to return to their homeland (Isaiah 44:28; 45:1).

In anticipation of this great deliverance, Isaiah wrote: *“How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him who brings good news, who proclaims peace, who brings glad tidings of good things, who proclaims salvation”* (52:7).

You may recognize that passage from Paul’s quotation of it in Romans 10:15, where he applied it to evangelism. What situation could appear more hopeless than to be separated from God by sin? Yet there is hope! God has provided for our deliverance from the cruel captivity of sin. Through the blood of Jesus Christ, our sin debt has been paid in full!

Jesus said to proclaim that good news to every person in every nation of the world (Matthew 28; Mark 16; Luke 24; Acts 1). Paul says that when we do, our

feet are beautiful! Now, few of us would think of our feet as physically attractive; but because we use those feet to bring the good news of salvation in Christ, they are beautiful!

If you want beautiful feet, don’t bother with a pedicure. Tell the good news of Jesus, and your feet will be beautiful!

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America’s Greatest Defense

The Bible insists that there is a connection between the moral vigor of a nation and its survivability. The strength of any nation lies in the goodness of its people.

“Blessed is the nation whose God is the Lord” (Psalm 33:12). *“Righteousness exalts a nation, but sin is a disgrace to any people”* (Proverbs 14:34).

History is full of examples of nations which fell because they forgot God and failed to walk in His ways. Because of their national iniquity, God allowed Israel to fall to Assyria in 722 BC. The wickedness of Assyria, in turn, led to their fall to the Babylonians in 612 BC. The nation of Judah fell to these same Babylonians in 586 BC. And, once again, God said it was because of sin. Mighty Babylon became so steeped in corruption that God overthrew it in 539 BC. Eventually Rome, the mightiest empire the world had known, collapsed when its burden of wickedness became too great to bear.

And America????

Righteousness is America’s greatest defense; sin is our window of ultimate vulnerability.

Do you love your country? Do you want to do something good for it? Then do all you can to help turn America’s heart back to God!

--Bobby Dockery (Fayetteville, AR) via *Old Paths*

Abba! Father!

“But you have received a spirit of adoption as sons by which we cry out, ‘Abba! Father!’” (Romans 8:15b).

I have heard it said that Abba means "Daddy" or "Papa." However, that doesn't convey the strong meaning behind Abba. In the first century, it was an identifier. Only an actual family member would dare to use Abba when referring to the head of household. A servant or slave, no matter how loved and well treated, would not dare call the master Abba. They weren't family. They would be severely punished if they called the master Abba.

If we have accepted Jesus, been born again (John 3 and Romans 6), and are obeying Him, then we are God's children and we can say, "Abba! Father!"

To further drive home the fact that we are children, we are told that we are heirs and we have an inheritance with Jesus (Romans 8:17).

We need to remember that we are God's family. We also must remember that being family carries responsibilities. We need to respect and revere our Father. We need to live a life that does not bring disgrace to God's family. We must also strive to be like our Father, following the example set by His only begotten Son, Christ Jesus.

Philip asked Jesus, *“Show us the Father.”* Jesus' answer was, *“He who has seen me, has seen the Father”* (John 14:8-9). We have a saying, "Like father, like son." Ask yourself, "When people see me, can they see a child of God?" Do you stand out like Jesus did or do you blend in with the world?

--Ed Wittlif (Denver, CO)