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NEWS & EVENTS – January 2023

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I have two pictures I wish you could see. The first one shows me as a young man holding my baby daughter, my first-born child. In the same photo, captured in time and memory, is my father, my grandfather, and my great-grandmother. In that snapshot, there are five living generations of my family in the same place at the same time. I thought that was significant at the time without realizing its true significance. The second picture portrays the youngest generation of that first picture as the mother of the next generation. By the time that picture was taken my great-grandmother had left the land of the living. In that photo, my grandfather had become the oldest of the five living generations and I had become a grandfather of the newest generation of my tribe. My first-born grandchild helped me realize I was a different person, yet still the same person. As we transition in life, it seems life transcends the generations. Life connects one generation to the next. The Living God transcends the time that connects them. In other words, Life lives on around us, and even within us, as we become connected to the Living God and one another in our relationships.

I was reflecting lately about my granddaughters maturing into adults and wondering if I would live to see the day when I was in the picture, or smartphone screen, of five living generations. And I would be the patriarch (*that's the oldest old guy*). While thinking it through, it was surprising to realize for that scenario to occur again, the child of my grandchild (*which has not appeared yet*) must give birth to another generation. That's a long time down my timeline. The key is to remember that timelines are totally transcended by the Living God...He lives outside of time. Listen to this response from the Lord Jesus to some religious skeptics. Some Sadducees were posing a question to Jesus about a resurrection...in which they didn't believe. If you don't believe in the power of God, what difference does it make to ask Him questions? Quite a bit, it seems, if you can hear and understand His answer.

But regarding the resurrection of the dead, have you not read what was spoken to you by God: "I AM THE GOD OF ABRAHAM, AND THE GOD OF ISAAC, AND THE GOD OF JACOB"? He is not the God of the dead but of the living. (Matthew 22:31-33)

The capitalized section in this New Testament passage refers to what Moses heard in the episode of the burning bush described in the third chapter of Exodus. He heard the voice of God referring to spiritual relationships with the ancestors of Moses. When Moses stopped to look at the bush that was burning, yet not consumed, it was hundreds of years since those patriarchs had lived in the earth. The mention of their names was significant to Moses because he was of the tribe of Levi, one of the sons of Jacob, who was also called Israel. What would he do when He realized the Word of the Lord was coming to him personally? We are never the same after that kind of encounter. You know, the encounter you have when you know the Word of the Lord has come to you personally and requires a response. As in the case with Moses, God often reveals our path into the future while declaring His Presence in our past. He gives us a choice of who or what we follow, a choice of who or what will have influence to shape our lives into the future.

Along with an old picture connecting me with my great-grandmother, I have an old Bible bound with a cloth cover that once belonged to her. The pages in it are fragile, disintegration having taken its toll over time. I only saw my great-grandmother a few times in my life. As a child, the most significant thing I can remember was that she was older than anyone I knew. From time to time, I open that old Bible. I cannot tell you for a certainty that she read from that Good Book often. I suspect she was no stranger to it. But I can tell you this for sure. The story that is relayed in that old book is the same story that any of us can read today. We can read firsthand what God's Word testifies about. We are privileged to know the story without relying on someone else to tell us. I can meditate on its meaning and be led by the same Spirit that inspired the writing as to how the Most High God reveals Life to humanity through a relationship with Jesus the Christ. If we will make it into the Kingdom of God, it will be because we have followed King Jesus. He will not be a stranger. The Living God leads to Life...everlasting life. He would have it no other way.

The God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob is the God of the generations. Every generation chooses their own path. Supernatural connections that are spiritual and holy are necessary for our pathway to end in God's Kingdom. The Spirit of God will lead you to King Jesus, the Word of God. What will we do with what God has said? A new generation will discover technology and GPS cannot deliver them into the Kingdom of God. We must be born again to see it. Jesus said so. You see, He chose me to choose Him. He enabled me to become born again. Following Jesus will get you there. Choose wisely...choose eternally.

Blessings to you,
Pastor Sam