**‘BE STILL AND KNOW THAT I AM GOD.’ 24/AUG/2014**

This past week we have been fasting as a congregation, looking for answers and solutions for the many difficult issues we all face; inquiring of God as to what He has for us in the future – wanting to know His will; listening for anything He might have to say; looking for breakthroughs in our difficulties; and praying for each other, for unity and harmony in our congregation and in the congregations throughout our city. This has been a week of removing entanglements and stilling the hundreds of voices clouding and crowding our minds, all competing for our attention. We want and we need to hear His voice. We give up or lay aside - we surrender - trusting in our minds, our ways and our plans, so we might experience the glory of His all-sufficiency, so we might be amazed at His solutions to our many problems. I have learned that when my mind is uncluttered with unnecessary junk, I can begin to hear His voice. I believe He is always speaking to us – we just can’t hear Him. He is ever trying to direct us, guide us and care for us, if we would just hear His voice and submit to His will, His ways and His Word. His presence in us is always prompting us and encouraging us in so many different ways – Lord; give us spiritual ears to hear what you are saying.

We want to take a few moments and reflect on this past week. Has God been speaking to you or has God given you a word for the congregation; a song, a verse of scripture – is there something you have to share?

Saturday morning I asked God what He had to say to me. Immediately a portion of scripture came to mind, ‘Be still and know that I am God.’ It is the first part of a verse found in **Psalms 46:10a** As I pondered this short statement, I realized that this is not just a saying from God’s Word (we have heard it many times) but this is a state of being. The verse doesn’t say ‘know God’ - it assumes we already know His nature. It says ‘know that I am God’. I believe God is telling us to stand back, stand down and back off in some of the situations and difficulties we face. In other words, let God be God; watch God go to work on our behalf; allow Him to have His way; give God time to work out the answer and bring His solution; let Him work things out for us in His good time, not necessarily in our good time. Yes, generally speaking, we are fellow-workers with God or we co-operate with God as His hands, His feet and His voice. But often we jump in and try to be the righteous judge, or the problem solver, or the all-wise wisdom giver, and we are not, because we are not God. (Not to say that there are not times when God has given us a word for someone). But all we end up doing is muddying the water, bringing hurt and confusion and making things worse. Have you ever been involved in a situation like that? Be sensitive to the Holy Spirit, be discerning and ask, should I jump in or should I wait patiently for God to address the issue?

‘Being still’ implies patience; quiet waiting. King David said in **Psalms 40:1,** ‘I waited patiently for the Lord, and He inclined unto me and heard my cry.’ We are a product of our ‘instant’ society – we pray for help or direction and we want the answer now – today – we can’t wait a day or week – we have no patience. Or worse yet, we make our prayers, and then tell God how to answer them. Have you ever done that? Imagine, the created being telling the great creator what to do and how to do it! Let us temper our prayers for ourselves and others with Jesus words in His prayer, ‘Thy will be done on earth as it is in Heaven.’ Amen?

Being human, we want to hear the answer ‘yes’ to our prayers, we do not want to hear ‘no’ and we certainly do not want to hear ‘wait a bit.’ Waiting on the Lord is not simple or easy, but just look at the benefits you receive for waiting patiently. **Psalms 40:1-5** 1) God will lift you out of your despair. Have you ever noticed that when you go to God in prayer over whatever issue, the problem seems to get smaller and the burden lighter? Roll your cares onto the burden-bearer. 2) God will set your feet on firm ground. Circumstances will not have their way with you and that feeling of ‘slippery’ is gone. No more pit, no more pitiful feelings. 3) God will steady your life, bringing the security and confidence you need to carry on. 4) God will give you new purpose, a new song, a new direction – and those around you will see how you are moving in spite of negative circumstances, and God will receive the glory. You will have the opportunity to testify of His goodness and mercy and love. No test, no testimony. 5) The blessings God will pour out on you are far too many to even write down or number. Count your blessings, name them one by one, count your many blessings and see what God has done!

So we can see that the blessings, guidance and direction we are looking for many times cannot be received until we have gone through a ‘trial period’ of waiting on God for clear direction or instruction. Rushing ahead without consulting God will only lead to more and greater difficulties to overcome. At least that has been the case in my life.

‘Being still’ does not mean that we are lazy, ignorant of what is going on or unconcerned, it means we are serene and peaceful, comfortable that God is at work solving the situation; we are not silent or inactive, neither are we fearful and restless. We are quietly patient, confidently expecting God’s intervention, living in an attitude of assured expectation that He will appear on the scene and that His will is going to be accomplished. I am reminded of some of our Ugandan experiences. I remember once that we had planned a crusade/seminar for a number of churches deep in the jungle, but had no money for the trip. Sandy and I told no one of the problem and went ahead with loading up the Land Rover with sound equipment etc and the team that was going on mission. We told them we had to stop at the bank to pick some money…… On another occasion, we had to get a monthly stipend to our native missionaries in Tanzania. It was only $100 usd but we didn’t have it. They were waiting at the bank in Arusha for the money, so being desperate, I had nothing to do but to go downtown Kampala to the Forex bureau where the money would be sent from. I was pacing up and down in front of the building, asking God what I was supposed to do. A vehicle suddenly stopped and the driver shouted to me, ‘Greg, what are you doing?’ I said…… These and many other miracles just confirmed to me that God is alive and working overtime on all my issues and on all your issues. He is unchangeable in His nature, purposes, promises and covenants; He will never fail us or leave us in a lurch; He is the Omnipotent One, the All-powerful One and more than able to help us, more than able to deliver us from the evil one! Amen? He is the Omniscient One, the All-wise God who knows and cares about every detail of our lives, our struggles, our problems and our futures; He is ready, willing and able to help us through every difficulty as we call on His name and as we wait patiently for His solution. God does things according to His will and in His time and that is why we pray, ‘Your will be done.’ He makes everything work out in our lives because He loves us and wants us to succeed – in this life, but especially for eternity!

‘Being still’ is a spiritual serenity and calmness that comes through a close, steady relationship with Christ. We can have peace in the middle of life’s storms because Jesus is in the boat of our lives. Call on His name and His power. Don’t panic and make rash or foolish decisions. Don’t allow your emotions to control you. Emotions will lead you astray, causing you to make bad decisions, causing you to crash. Choose to live your life by what God says in His love letter to you. ‘I’m not moved by what I feel; I’m only moved by the Spirit that’s real.’ Make that your testimony.

Close with **Psalms 46:1,2a ‘God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in the time of trouble. Therefore we will not fear.’**