

## Prophecies for November 9, 2008

You know, it just amazes me, Lord, that you always give us so much more than we deserve. When we bring you our burdens and our troubles and our sins, you take them from us; but You don't leave us empty - You don't leave us naked. You give us garments of praise. Of course, we have to put forth some effort there too. But You give us the garments, and, as we praise You, Lord, we're not left down here anymore. You lift us up so that we're right beside You, above all the problems of this earth. Thank You, Lord, once again for being more amazing and more loving and more merciful and more gracious than we can even imagine. We only have to do one thing, and that's give it to You. And You take it from there. Thank you for Your garments of praise.

Our God reigns. And, ultimately, our God is the only one who reigns. Some trust in horses, some trust in chariots, but we will trust in the name of the Lord our God. Some trust in economic leaders, and some trust in political leaders, but we will trust in the name of the Lord our God. We, as the church, are called to and must pray for our leaders; for our economic leaders, for our political leaders, for our church leaders. But we must not trust in them to save us from whatever the trials and tribulations we see going on in this world. Ultimately, they're not going to fix the economy. They're not going to fix the war. They're not going to fix the abortion problem. God reigns, and that's where we put our trust. So Lord, we pray that You'd give us the grace to support our leaders, to pray for them, to encourage them; but not to believe that they're going to be able to save us. But we pray also that we don't get cynical and give up, because we know You reign; that You are in control and that no matter how it looks to us sometimes in our personal lives, in our national life, or any other way You know what You're doing. And so we thank You for that, Lord. We thank You that You are in charge, and we thank You that You give us the grace to know where to put our trust and not to rely on the wrong things.

Forgive us, Lord, for thinking we're off the hook when we come to worship You on Sunday and say all the right things, or even if we read our Bibles everyday, or even go out every two years or so and vote for the right people. Because God says take away noise of your assemblies if you don't care about justice and righteousness. That's what He cares about. Are you putting your money where your mouth is? Forgive us, Lord, for not doing that; for thinking that we have your name and therefore we're off the hook for living Christian lives and for Your justice and Your righteousness and Your mercy and Your forgiveness in this world. And so we pray, Lord, give us a new heart for that. So that we may not just worship You with our mouths, for that worship does not please You at all. But worship that God finds true and right is to take care of widows and orphans in their distress and not to become polluted by the world. So said James, so said Amos, so said any number of other people that are worth listening to. So I pray that You will give us a heart to not just worship You with our mouths but with our lives.

I don't know if this fits in right here, but I really need to say something. I really need to thank God publicly for a couple of things. The week before last both of my girls were hit with a couple of things. Sometimes I drive my husband and my family crazy because I'm never pessimistic; I'm always looking for the positive and always saying, "Well, something good's going to happen, and it'll all work out." This time all I could do was sit before God in awe. But if any of you don't know, Melanie has a blood clot. But now we find out (and I don't understand any of this) she has a chromosome in her blood that would cause a woman to not be able to carry children. That's what's caused the blood clot. Kari was in a car accident where both of the cars were totaled, but look at her. I will not be the one to stand here and say, "Why is this happening to my girls? Why am I having to go through this?" I will not be the one to say that. I'm going to be the one that says, "Thank you God for giving me two children who love

You; who want to follow You. And thank You for saving them these last two weeks. Thank you for saving Kari in the car accident. Thank you for finding the blood clot before anything else happened and for finding the reason it was there.

On the way in this morning, even in a busy household and with kids in the car and we're driving in trying to figure out what we're going to do. It kind of fits in with what the Lord's being saying this morning. To give you a God's eye-view of the world: when He looks down toward the weak, it's like He sees a star scape 'cause each one of us with faith has the Holy Spirit in us, and that's a fire that burns in us at all times. God can see that very plainly. It's very hard, increasingly harder, in this country and in this world to live as the Lord would have us live and not be tainted by this world. Yet we're still supposed to be in the world helping people, and sometimes that means leaving yourself vulnerable. And sometimes you will fall because of that. But He showed me this morning: as the body congregates, that star scape becomes more like kind of little galaxies all over and the light gets so much brighter. And it's like the Lord was showing me the power that concentrates the body. St. Paul said don't give up on congregating on Sundays, but continue to break bread and be in communion with each other. It's not just for Him; it's for us. And Lord, this is a segway into the next song, just as we are magnified when we come together, Lord, we just pray that You are also magnified when we come together.

Prophecies for November 16, 2008

You know, I really love that song, and I remember when I came to this church, I was raised Catholic and it was either in Catholic school or in catechism, and I'm sure they taught me this, but I probably didn't pay any attention. But I remember when I came here, I came to understand that, like, why Jesus died for our sins. But what is that? Like, what does that mean? You know, but I was really questioning all that. But my sister suggested I just take it up in faith which was a good way to just open up the door and let God speak to me about it. And slowly He taught me what it meant. But I remember one day sitting with Amanda (we were having a prayer time) and asking her, I said, "Sometimes I think I believe this because all of these scholars believe it, and they're pretty smart. So, you know, maybe, you know, that's why I believe it." And Amanda said, "No, the reason I believe it is I don't think anybody could have thought this up." And that's the truth. You know, it's like it's so complicated and it's so simple. And the more that I like let this into my - I remember telling Wanda one day, like, I believe this to the marrow of my bones. When I walked into this church, I didn't even know what I believed. But, you know, I walk into this church, I walk out of this church, and it's still in my bones because it's the truth. And the truth won't leave you. I know even as a kid, and a lot of us may have gone to church as a kid and learned this through Bible or whatever and then went off and did our drug exploration and all that kind of stuff; but we came back because the truth is still here. And I'd just, like, challenge anybody that's, like, not sure, because that's kind of how I was. I mean, "This guy died for my sins! What does that mean?" If you walk up to someone in Asheville and say, "Well, Jesus died for your sins." They'll be like, "What? You know, what sin? I don't sin. I'm a good person." And, it's like, you know, take it up on faith, and God'll show you. And He's shown me. And it is amazing! And I feel like, even though I know the truth, that I feel the truth, there's still so much more that He's going to show me about the truth. And that's a blessing.

I think some people view the courts of God as being this orderly church service with a bunch of very smirchy, stiff upper lip people hanging around. That's not how I view the Kingdom of God. That's not how I view heaven, partly because that's not how the Bible views heaven. The Bible views heaven as a very raucous sort of place where all seem to be invited to come to the wedding feast. And Jesus

mentioned the wedding feast and the people who were invited didn't come. He says, "Invite whoever's on the street. Just bring them in. It doesn't matter who they are. Bring them on in. Give them the right clothes, and they're invited." And that's the Kingdom of God. It's: you were invited not because you were worthy but because you were there; because you were created, and you said, "Yes." That's all that matters. And it's not about your worthiness. It's not about being the right kind of person. It's about knowing the right God and worshipping Him and Him alone. I have two images going through my head: One was when I was at Mepkin Abbey a number of years ago, and we were walking back from one of the services to the dining hall area, the refectory. We were watching all the monks walk by, and some of them were in wheelchairs and some of them were sort of hobbling along and some were fat and some were thin, and Dad looked over to me and said, "The ragtag army of God." And that's absolutely true. You know, God has a funny army. It's a bunch of weak people, a bunch of broken people, a bunch of people who the world would not have picked to fight. And that's the ones that God chooses. He chooses the weak ones to shame the strong and the ignorant ones to shame the wise. So be of good cheer if you feel ignorant and weak and broken today, because you are the exact person God needs right now to fight with His ragtag army.

Just as Christopher started talking, what was going through my mind is: elsewhere is a very lonely place. And most of us have probably been elsewhere at various times in our lives. Maybe some of us are elsewhere right now. And, as Christopher's words have confirmed to me, elsewhere is something you choose if you're there. You don't have to be elsewhere. I just finished a book, and it has nothing to do with Christianity, but there was a statement one character made to another character I think applies. He said, "Either you're going to figure out you're not as weird as you think you are, or you're going to decide being weird is okay." And that's kind of, again, how, as Christopher was saying, the army of God is. We isolate ourselves. We choose to put ourselves elsewhere because we think we're too weird or too damaged or too unacceptable. And God doesn't think that. And the more I get to know people in the body of God and have the privilege to hear people share things about their lives, the more I realize that God just does amazing things with us despite our very best efforts to screw it up. So, if you're elsewhere, you don't have to stay elsewhere. I think that's what God wants us to know.

Prophecies for November 23, 2008

As we were singing the first hymn today, "He is the Lord," and we crown Him Lord of all things - But if He's the Lord that means we have to trust Him with everything. So that makes Him the Lord of our problems and the Lord of all our issues. 'Cause if we give them to Him then He decides whether we need them or not. Lord, I pray that You'd make the changes in us that are necessary, Lord, ... in Jesus' name.

I think we need to tell you, Satan, that we know what you're up to, and you're not going to win. We know what you're up to with this building. We know what you're up to with our physical bodies; with the pain and the other attacks that have come against people. We know what you're up to with the fear. We know what you're up to, and you're not going to win! 'Cause we know who's in charge, and we

