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From the desk of Rick Hagans

On The Road With Pastor Rick:

By the time you start reading this I'll be back on the road. This time to Haiti.

I just found out last night that I'm going. I'll leave tomorrow morning. I was driving home from a revival in St. Stephens, Alabama when Kim called to tell me our good friend, Denny Nissley (Christ In Action ministries) was getting ready to head out to Haiti to set up a long-term relief effort. Denny's wife, Sandy, told Kim she had a deep concern about Denny going by himself on this trip. In fact, she had almost a spiritual premonition that he would be killed or die in Haiti. Sandy Nissley, who is a bold, Holy Ghost warrior of a woman was scared. Denny decided to ask someone to go with him and he looked at her and said, "I want Rick to go with me." She asked Kim if I could go with him. I don't know what she thought I could do to help him, usually I'm the one to get in trouble, not out of it. Kim told me it was ok with her if I went, in fact, she thought I should. I was dead tired, dodging deer while driving down Highway 43 when I said, "sure, why not." That's what friends are for. That's what my life and ministry is all about. That what we use the monies you entrust us with, for. So, once again I'm writing you quite literally while I'm on the road.

I wonder what the "roads" will have in store for me in Haiti.

The following message has been burning in my heart for weeks. It seems to sum up a lot as to what we do and why. I hope you'll take the time to read it. I dare you to try and live it, I double-dog dare you...

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WHAT MAKES JOB SO SPECIAL?

I don't know if you're like me or not. I don't spend a lot of time reading the Book of Job.

Reading about boils, blisters and a nagging wife doesn't do much to lift me up. I used to think, why do I need to read about Job's three self-righteous, religious, so called friends? I deal with people like that every day.

But then, I often find myself thinking about how God Almighty said to satan, "Have you considered My servant Job?" (Job 1:8)

Job was on God's mind. Pretty awesome thought isn't it? Satan tells God he's been roaming all over the earth. He was not travelling all across the planet on a vacation. He was then as he is in John 10:10 a thief come to "steal, kill and destroy." We further know from scripture that he sought most of all, "the precious life." (Proverbs 6:26)

So when satan brags to God that he's been in God's created world seeking God's most precious creation, man, God tells him, "How about Job?" God wasn't saying this to set Job up, He was saying this because Job was the best of all men alive at the time. When God considered His creation, Job was the best He had ever made. Job was God's crowning achievement at that time. He wasn't perfect, like all men, he had sinned and come short of God's glory. You can read the Book of Job and see that. But despite his flaws, Job was God's favorite. That says a lot.

We don't have to surmise why God thought so much of Job, scripture tells us in Job 1:8. God tells satan, "Have you considered My servant Job? There is no one like him on the earth..." WOW! What a compliment. Job must've been some kind of man to have God commend his nature and say, "There is no one like him on the earth."

We stop and take notice when someone is mentioned by the President as a hero or a role model. The whole world knows when the Queen of England "knight" someone for extraordinary deeds. So we'd all be well served to pay attention when God says this man is absolutely, unequivocally the best man on earth. God would know and God said Job's the man.

The Lord gave some of his reasoning in declaring Job #1 in Job 1:8. The Lord says what makes Job so special and like none other on earth is the fact that he's "a blameless and upright man, fearing God and turning away from evil."

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It's easy for us to interpret that to assume Job is perfect. If we do we're wrong. We know the Word of God tells us that, "ALL have sinned and come short of the glory of God." (Romans 3:23) Job had sinned. If you read his book you'll see him admit that. Job fell short of the glory of God. Laying in a garbage dump with sores all over his body, this would seem obvious. Yet God indeed saw something special in Job.

I've oft wondered what it was that set him so apart? I would love the Lord to see something commendable in me. What son or daughter doesn't want to please their father? So perhaps the lessons of Job have more to speak to us than how we deal with boils and big-mouthed friends.

The thought of being "blameless" can cause us all to turn and slink away. We know we're not perfect, so it seems counterpart to assume we're not blameless. The truth comes when we realize what "blameless" means in it's original Hebrew context. It doesn't mean "perfect." What it does mean is "complete." The word implies a "coupled together" that makes something or someone "complete", or as the scripture tells us, "blameless." And folks, we can live with that because we know as Christians, our righteousness is in Him.

"Coupled" or joined with the perfect Christ we are "complete." We can be to God Himself, "blameless" when our lives are "hid in Christ."

So, even though the thought of being "blameless" would at first keep us from daring to compare ourselves to Job, because of Christ, we can. Another word for "blameless" is forgiven. God saw Job as "blameless", as forgiven. If we are Christians, washed in the Blood and bathed in His light..God sees us as no different.

God also saw Job as "upright". It would be hard for any humble, honest man to so describe himself. Again, a further defining of the word from the Hebrew word helps. The word "upright" means "just." Job was a just man. As a believer in Christ, who's been forgiven their sins, we become "just." Romans 5:1 says we are "justified by faith." Just as if we'd never sinned.

The Hebrew word for "upright" also means "well-done." What a beautiful thought that God, who promises to meet us all in Heaven with a greeting, "Well done, thou good and faithful servant" (Matthew 25:21), here so praises Job ahead of eternity by saying his life was "well done." I often remind people we don't have to wait till Heaven to hear the Father say, "well done." We can hear it at the close of every day lived to it's fullest for Him. Job heard it long before he died.

Job's character was further cheered by God for fearing Him. Boy, is this a lost virtue in America today. Few seem to fear Him. When was the last time you heard a sermon about the fear of God? Yet scripture tells us, "the fear of God is the beginning of wisdom." (Psalm 111:10) Job must've been quite the wise man for God Himself testified of Job's fear (awe, respect, worship and reverence) of Him.

To me, this is an easy one to obtain. Just remember the logic found on a bumper sticker, "There IS a God...and you're not Him!"

You can take a walk outside on any clear night to look up at the stars and think, God flung every one of those in space, and keeps them there. He even calls them by name, trillions upon bunches of trillions. It's easy to think how big God is and how small we are on a night like that. It's easy to fear God in the middle of a night like that. There is a God, and you know what? He sent his Son to die a cruel death on a wooden cross for you and for me. It's easy to revere a God like that. Job feared God, and if you read Job 38 you'll understand a bit more why. Job 38:4 has God telling Job, "Where were you when I laid the foundation of the earth?" Again, in verse 7 of Job 38 God chides Job with the thought of, where were you Job "When the morning stars sung together?" In verse 12 God asks, "Have you ever in your life commanded the morning and caused the dawn to know it's place?" You can read God's discourse with Job in chapters 38 and 39 summed up with Job's admission in Job 40:3-4, "Then Job answered the Lord and said, 'Behold I am insignificant, what more can I say to you?'"

Yes, Job feared God. And once any of us get one real glimpse of His glory, we'll fear Him too.

Job was also a man who "turned away from evil." In an era of cheap grace, such a trait may not even seem important to you, but it was important to God. He's the one who mentioned it, three times (Job

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1:1, 1:8 and 2:3). Three times God commends Job for turning away from evil. Once, twice, three times the charm. Job indeed charmed God with his commitment to holiness. With I Peter 1:16 telling us to “be holy as I am holy” we’d do well to remember Job’s example. God remembered Job and praised him for his example

If God thought so much of Job perhaps we should think more of him.

I’ll be honest with you. Even with Job being blameless, upright fearing God and turning away from evil, he’s just not the type of role model that excites me. But he excited God, so I know there’s more. God doesn’t think so highly of a man for keeping the rules. There’s a name for men who keep all the rules, “pharisees” and they certainly weren’t God’s favorites.

Is there any Biblical account of what made Job more than just a rule keeper? You bet there is. And if you’re like me, you’ve never noticed it even though it’s been right in plain view ever since scripture was inspired. Some scholars say the Book of Job is the oldest book of all. So Job’s defense and definition have been there for a long, long time.

You can find Job’s own assessment of what made him different in Job, chapter 29. These are Job’s own words of testimonial. This is what sets Job apart, makes him a heroic example of true faith, and I believe, what endeared him so deeply to God’s own heart.

Job tells us in chapter 29, verses 1-4 that this was who I was, when I was at my best; “in months gone by” (vs 1), “in the prime of my days” (vs 4). Job tells us during this time things were so good his “steps were bathed in butter and the rock poured out for me streams of oil (representing a full flow of the Holy Spirit). Job’s reputation was so honored during that time that he said whenever he went into the city, “The young men saw me and hid themselves, and the old men arose and stood.” “The princes stopped talking...and the voice of the nobles was hushed.” When Job came round, people stood in his honor and stopped whatever he was doing just to watch him pass by. Why? What was it about Job that hushed politicians and humbled royalty? No doubt the same characteristics that caused God Almighty to take notice of him. Characteristics that kept him ever fresh in the mind of God and made him a role model of what God, the creator of man, felt should be the example of all men. What was it about Job? We’d do well to find out.

It isn’t really too difficult to discern. In Job 29 he tells us why...

*Because I delivered the poor that cried, and the fatherless, and him that had none to help him.
The blessing of him that was ready to perish came upon me: and I caused the widow’s heart to sing for joy.
I put on righteousness, and it clothed me: my judgment was as a robe and a diadem.
I was eyes to the blind, and feet was I to the lame.
I was a father to the poor: and the cause which I knew not I searched out.
And I brake the jaws of the wicked, and plucked the spoil out of his teeth.
(Job 29:12-17)*

WOW! Did you get that? I’ve been a Christian for forty years and I never noticed that. I’ve read and re-read the Book of Job numerous times and I’ve ever noticed it. I’ve preached from the Book of Job and heard sermons from the Book and I’ve never heard anyone discuss what’s written there in plain sight.

Job was special because Job lived out what God has called us all to do.

He “delivered the poor who called for help.”

He “was the orphan’s helper, who otherwise had no help.”

Job said it was a blessing to help those perishing. It was not a burden, but a blessing!

And it was said of Job he, “made the widow’s sing for joy.” I don’t think I’ve read a more poignant, beautiful portion of scripture in years. It moved me to weeping and as I considered it, moved me far beyond tears. I want to be like Job. I want God to somehow, someway use Hope’s Inn and Hosanna Home, these days it’s all I can think about. It’s what I’m more than ever dedicated to do. James 1:27 tells us that “pure religion, undefiled in the sight of God, our Father, is to visit (care for) the orphan and the

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widows.” I believe Job knew that. Scripture tells us he did it. I hope history says the same for us.

Job goes on to tell us his justice was like a robe and turban. He wore it for all the world to see. Micah 6:8 tells us “He hath shewed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth the LORD require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God.” Job did justly. His light wasn’t hidden in a basket, it lit his world and made a difference. Don’t tell Job politics and faith don’t mix. Job’s faith changed the politics of his era. His justice made a difference.

He was, he tells us, “eyes to the blind and feet to the lame.” He was involved personally at the deepest point of people’s need. This was a hands on involvement. Job didn’t just send a check, he gave of his life.

He was a “father to the needy.” His family was the “poor cold huddled masses yearning to breathe free” of his generation. He was a father to the needy, not just a banker or a politician claiming the needy as his clientele. He was a “father”. It doesn’t take very long looking at scripture to see all that entails. A ring, a robe, sandals on his feet and a fatted calf came from the prodigal son’s father. No doubt Job similarly gave of his best, and he gave it as scripture says, “to the needy.”

Job went even further to “investigate the case he did not know.” He helped people beyond his normal circle of friends and family. He got involved. He did not sit on the sidelines and let someone else do the ministry. Job was the minister.

He broke the jaws of the wicked. WOW! Job sounds almost Irish here, a good Holy Ghost uppercut to the devil! He was no sissy. He fought the good fight Paul calls us to. Job’s faith was hands on.

He even “snatched the prey from his (the devil’s) teeth.” That’s an “in your face faith.” That was Job, not the sickly little man sniveling in the dump we thought he always was.

He was a giver, a fighter and a lover...is there any doubt now why he was God’s favorite?

Might we all take up Job’s cause, the needy and the broken.

Might we all live like Job when he thought he was dying.

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Please remember, Harvest Evangelism is a true Faith Ministry.

We depend upon the generosity of our friends and the faithfulness of our Father to finance all we do.

Thank you for your prayerful support.



Pastor Rick coming out of a church service in Port Au Prince, Haiti Sunday morning. You can see the hundreds, maybe even thousands of people gathered together to worship and hear a Word from God.

The Haitian gov’t may want us to believe that Haiti is a Voodoo nation, but this picture tells another story...The One True God lives and reigns in the hearts of many Haitian people.

You can see in Rick’s eyes the tale of the tragic pain he has witnessed. Pray God will use this trip for His Glory.

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