

CRIBB<S>NOTE - December 7, 2008

The adage, "Timing is everything," applies appropriately during this season of Advent. Combined with another popular saying, "Stuff happens," we sense how meaningful certain events can be in our lives. Just when it may seem things are out of control and we don't know how we are going to get through a situation, something changes everything. We see the world differently. It's all in the timing.

My dear friend, Gordon Dalbey, used to always say the same thing every time we got together, "Man, it's so good to see you. You are right on time. There's a lot we need to talk about."

In our absences from each other no matter how long the gaps, we discovered there were parallels we shared as our separate lives shared common experiences. It was a mystery but a persistent pattern that lasted for years. Our conversations were always 'right on time'. We filled in the blanks about our adventures and discoveries. We were "soul brothers" to the core.

When the Prophet Isaiah received his ordination to preach, he appeared right on time with his messages of hope. The people of Israel were in the throes of slavery, exiled from their homeland in Jerusalem. The city had been ransacked by the Babylonians and the people were taken captive to a distant place. Things were out of sorts and they had no way to escape.

In the midst of their troubles another voice was heard. The prophet spoke of hope. No doubt many of the people had given up hope. Without any way to reverse their circumstances and no way to overthrow their captors, they could not see any way out of their troubles. Yet, the prophet proclaimed a new day, a time when Messiah would come.

In our times, who speaks the truth and shares a word of encouragement? Who stands before the nation and declares the Word of God without compromise? Who would dare to give hope to the down-trodden?

We have arrived at a moment when things appear to be falling apart. Our economy is on the brink of collapse; international relations are at an all-time low; confidence in government is scattered. Times are bad in America. Yet, there is another word to be spoken. Opportunity is rampant. Change is declared. Hope awaits us.

That does not mean we will avoid the depths of disappointment. We may not escape the pain of a bad situation, but we have confidence no matter what comes our way God will carry us through. That is our faith. There is responsibility associated with how things will turn out.

We have the opportunity to form new alliances around the world. We have a chance to become involved in the welfare of our neighbors. We can re-prioritize our personal lives and work to shift the priorities of our governments from an emphasis on materialism and militarism to a strong commitment to improve the quality of life for the people of this nation and around the world. We can shift our resources away from threatening others with our might to coming to the aid of those most vulnerable with the greatest need.

This is a special period in which we can return to God with the clarity that life itself is dependent on the One who creates all things.

It is time for a change of heart, mind, and soul. As bad news flows we are able to douse the flames of fear and design a garden of blossoming flowers. New life is given and there is hope for us still.