

VISION FORWARD



MAKE HASTE SLOWLY

After Pastor Jonathan asked me to compose this month's "Vision Forward" there were several things that came to mind as a theme. In thinking and seeking guidance I have settled on addressing one of the big concerns of my heart: finding our way through uncertain times into a future clouded and foggy.

How do we go into the fog and not get lost?

As I have grown older different things have announced themselves into my life from the Lord. The need to make my judgments in pencil, so that they can easily be amended as new facts emerge is one such change. In general, slowing down my whole judgment-assessment-speaking process is another life-style change that has come with (hopefully) greater maturity. "Make haste slowly," is what I hear often in prayer.

We find ourselves in a day more confusing and more challenging with far more polarizing views than I can personally ever, ever recall. We see more shifting

coming at us faster than melting polar ice caps. The ground itself seems to move and peace becomes a rare commodity. To "make haste slowly" seems more and more to be good counsel.

In this strange day, there are several things I have discovered that help me conduct my life in staying safe and moving in a right direction in dark and foggy times. Let me share them with you.

1. Trust the level. As many of you know, I made my living for a number of years as a carpenter and contractor before entering full-time ministry. One of the most important tools in my career is a four-foot mahogany and brass level that has been used and abused by me for over 35 years. It is so important that I have named it and refer to it as "The Business".

It has saved me from many mistakes and helped me to support my family. You can often find your eyes being tricked by something that looks level, but isn't. Something that looks straight but has a dip or cup or twist. So I have learned to trust the level even when

my eyes are saying “this is straight” or “this is flat and true”. The level does not lie. The level can be trusted.

The level is the Word of God. What it says is “good” is GOOD, and what it says is right and straight is RIGHT AND STRAIGHT.

Philippians 4:6-7 “Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all comprehension, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.”

2. Trust the compass. As one who loves to hunt and fish and be out in the woods there is another tool that has endeared itself to me. My compass.

It has saved me from disaster on many occasions. You may not realize this, but we all favor one leg or the other when we walk and consequently, we tend to move in a left- or right-hand circle if there is nothing to help guide us. We will literally walk in circles thinking we are on a bee-line to our destination. The compass has turned my course many times, even when I have anxiously thought “it must be wrong”. It can be trusted.

The compass is the promise of God's care. Trust the promise of God to be with us and to not forsake us. “*Make haste slowly*” means to trust Him in His care.

Lamentations 3:21-25 “This I recall to my mind, therefore I have hope. The LORD'S lovingkindnesses indeed never cease, for His compassions never fail. They are new every morning; great is Your faithfulness. ‘The LORD is my portion,’ says my soul, ‘therefore I have hope in Him. The LORD is good to those who wait for Him, to the person who seeks Him.’”

3. Stay the course. I have learned to make **no panic moves**. Quite often, when a dangerous or even an anxious moment arrives, we give in to old impulses and make a reaction move. We ‘panic’. We make ‘knee jerk’ movements that don’t help. If anything, they get us into deeper trouble.

We need to learn to keep a straight and steady course unless we are directed otherwise. “*Steady as she goes.*” We need to follow the last direction given without doubting or turning right or left. Even when to do so seems counter-intuitive and wrong, like a mistake. My old friend Noah taught me that.

Genesis 8:13-18 “Now it came about in the six hundred and first year, in the first month, on the first of the month, the water was dried up from the earth. Then Noah removed the covering of the ark, and looked, and behold, the surface of the ground was

dried up. In the second month, on the twenty- seventh day of the month, the earth was dry. Then God spoke to Noah, saying, ‘Go out of the ark, you and your wife

and your sons and your sons' wives with you. Bring out with you every living thing of all flesh that is with you, birds and animals and every creeping thing that creeps on the earth, that they may breed abundantly on the earth, and be fruitful and multiply on the earth.” So Noah went out, and his sons and his wife and his sons' wives with him.”

In this portion is another clue as to how we get through to the next step in Christ, whatever it may be. You need to notice that on the first month, on the first day of the month, Noah looks out and sees that the ground is dry. This is after almost a full year of being cooped up with the various animals and his family. The smells and the noise and the rigors of a quarantined life must have been overpowering! Sound familiar? Closed in, boxed up, life as he knew it gone, with no cable or internet and yet, in spite of what must have been a strong urge to get outside and to resume something of a normal life, he waits. **It isn’t until, roughly, fifty-seven more days that God speaks to him and tells him, “NOW, GO OUT OF THE ARK!”**

We don’t know what was being accomplished in that time span of 57 days, but what we can surmise is that it was for the best. An unknown better than if he had simply bolted to the great outdoors with his family! Noah waited upon the Lord to guide and direct without taking independent actions, without turning right or left.

“**Make haste slowly**” means to trust we will hear Him in due time to give direction. Meanwhile, we will search His Word and let it inform our perspectives.

It means we will remember all of His past care for those in the Scriptures and for us in our own past.

It means we will continue to do all the good we can and to seek Him in patient obedience.

OCTOBER PRAYER TARGETS

Take out your phone, set a 2-3 minute timer, and pray daily:

1. That we will be soon able to resume a more face-to-face fellowship.
2. That we will find an evangelistic heart for the lost around us. Time is short.
3. For the upcoming elections. Let peace reign.