

RANSOMED HEART

LOVE GOD. LIVE FREE.

October 2012

Dearest Friends,

You are longing for a kingdom.

That's what all our issues are about, ultimately. You are longing for a kingdom. But you forgot this, and when you forget this, you find yourself in quite a dilemma. Because you bring to this world expectations it cannot possibly fulfill, and that precious heart of yours goes into a nosedive.

And O, how we forget this. Two weeks ago I was walking in the fields, wrestling with hope and disappointment. Hope deferred, the Scripture says, makes the heart sick. Frankly, I was pretty heartsick and pretty sick of being heartsick, and upset with God about not doing more to prevent it. Gently, the Spirit of God brought this passage to mind:

“...set your hope fully on the grace to be given you when Jesus Christ is revealed”
(1 Peter 1:13).

Fully? *Fully*? I don't think my hopes are set there even partially. Now yes, yes, I'm a Christian and I believe in heaven. But on a practical, day-to-day basis, my hopes are not set on the return of the King. Really now – stop and ask yourself, “What am hoping for these days?” You'll discover that whatever the details might be, however faint the hope might seem, the bottom line is that you are hoping for some version of life working out. Hoping the doctors come up with a solution; hoping to have enough to make ends meet; hoping your friends come through, or that love shows up. Just let your heart fill in the blank: “I hope....”

All good hopes, but very immediate hopes. Our focus is almost entirely, almost all the time, on life working out. Notice where all your worries and fears come from; this is the stuff that keeps us up at night. Life isn't working out. It sets us up for heartache. Then we get mad at our world, mad at God; we start despising our longings; we give up on hope and shift to survival mode. The problem is not with your desires and longings; the problem is not with hope. The problem lies in location, and timing.

God has given you a heart for his kingdom. This is one of the most important things you can know about yourself. (Did you know this? When was the last time you told yourself, *I have a heart for God's kingdom*?) All the beauty you long for – when you see a photo of some exotic place, when a flower makes you stop and take a deep breath, when some song nearly brings you to tears because it is so lovely – that is a heart for the kingdom of God.

All those desires you have for laughter and friendship, for love – when a birthday rolls round and you hope you're remembered; when Christmastime comes and you hope that this year it will be really special; when you smile to remember that wonderful summer night on the back deck just laughing and storytelling with friends – that is your heart for the kingdom.

All those yearnings you have for adventures and triumphs, those movies that stir you so deeply, those trips you'd love to take someday, those victories you'd give your life savings to see happen – that is your heart for the kingdom. Your heart is telling you about the kingdom you are made for.

And friends – that kingdom is coming. It *is* coming.

“I will not leave you as orphans; I will come” (John 14:18)

For in just a very little while, “He who is coming will come and will not delay” (Hebrews 10:37)

You too, be patient and stand firm, because the Lord's coming is near (James 5:8)

“I am coming soon” (Rev 3:11)

“Behold, I *am* coming” (Rev 22:12)

Back to the fields, and “set your hope fully” on the return of Jesus. I tried it. Meaning, I let my heart run out in that direction; gathered up my hopes and set them all on that one event. The result surprised me: an immediate freedom of heart. I kind of thought it would make me a rather detached person, resigned to the things of this world. Not at all. My heart was suddenly free to enjoy what God was bringing, partial though it was. And that's the secret – that “partial.” Isn't that what we struggle most with? Our friends are friends...kind of. Our work is satisfying...kind of. Marriage is marriage...kind of. Church is church...kind of. Our kingdom heart shouts for more.

And more is coming. It really is.

The kingdom of Jesus is coming.

I want you to try this – gather up all your hopes, and set them fully on this thought: *The kingdom of Jesus is coming, and with it the life I am longing for.* Stay with that for more than the usual nanosecond. *The kingdom of Jesus is coming, and with it the life I am longing for.* Notice what begins to happen. Your heart is freed up a little – free to forgive, free to love, free to enjoy the partial now. Just free.

Offered in love,



John

PS In this life in the “not yet,” we have two new resources to strengthen you. One for women – the “Pearl Collection” of Captivating's greatest talks; one for men – the DVDs of our “Advanced Boot Camp.” May they equip you, deeply, for life in the partial.