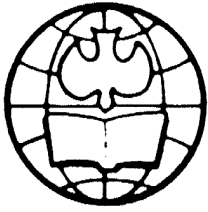


Northern Florida Christian Center



An interdenominational, Spirit-filled ministry touching people with Jesus' love

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NOV/DEC 2020

REQUIRED FAITHFULNESS

By: Retha Garten

As I prepare to write this newsletter, this nation is in the midst of an incredible, unsettled race for the president of our nation, and a couple senate races too close to call. As you know, this nation is caught in the midst of issues we have never, ever faced before.

I have heard that some people who call themselves Christians have said very openly, *"I'm giving up on Christianity."* As a disciple of Jesus, Peter, answering when the question came up of continuing to follow Jesus as others turned their back on Him, gave us the obvious answer for Christians today. When some of His followers complained about Jesus' requirements for being His disciples, they responded, *"Many (notice many) of His disciples, when they had heard this, said, 'This is a hard saying, who can hear it?'"* John 6:60, 66 *"From that time many of His disciples went back, and walked no more with Him."* Then when Jesus asked His 12 disciples, *"Will you also go away?"* Here is Simon Peter's answer, *"Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life"* verses 67-68.

I point out this segment of Scripture because it is to be the response that we, if we are true disciples of Jesus, must...must...must believe and respond.

I am not giving up on Jesus, nor am I giving up on America. This nation was established through the efforts of God-fearing men who based the foundation of America on biblical truths and prayer.

Prophetic voices tell us we are now living in the last days. Apostle Paul gave us a vivid picture of what these days would look like, and told us to know something, *"This know also, that in the last days perilous (harsh, savage, difficult, dangerous, painful, fierce, grievous, hard to deal with) times will come.*



Paul then goes on to describe what people will be like, and we are seeing it every day II Timothy 3. And then he adds, *"Yes, and all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution"* verse 12.

And what about Christians who do not hold onto Jesus Christ during these difficult days? Paul also tells us about that, in his first letter to Timothy: *"Now the Spirit expressly says that in latter times some shall **depart from the faith**, giving heed to deceiving spirits and doctrines of devils"* I Timothy 4:1, (my emphasis added).

And this one regarding Christians who admit they are giving up on Christianity before Jesus returns for His Church. *"Let no one deceive you by any means, for that Day shall not come, except there come a **falling away first**, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition"* II Thessalonians 2:3

You might be thinking about now, *"Wow, Retha, you sure have written some very negative things so*

To Encourage You...

RIGHT ON TARGET

“I was in the Spirit on the Lord’s day, and heard behind me a great voice, as of a trumpet.”

Revelation 1:10



Retha Garten

When you follow Me with your whole heart, you will be at the exact spot I need for you to be, at the right moment I need for you to be there, to fulfill the designated purpose that I send you to fulfill. This is what the Christian life and walk with Me are all about: fulfilling My purposes in My time and in My way.

My Spirit caught Philip away and brought him to his next place of divine appointment (see Acts 8:39-40). When My children are completely filled with and possessed by My Spirit, they will fulfill My purpose for their daily walk here on earth.

So often My children pray that they might fulfill My purposes for themselves on earth. Doing so is this simple: a) being filled with My Spirit’s divine ability; b) being open to hear My instructions; c) obeying without question what you have heard from Me. Your heart says, “*How do I know it is You speaking to me, Lord?*” That is why being filled with My Spirit must be **first** and **foremost** so that you will **know** that you have heard My voice. Be filled with My Spirit so that faith will fill your heart when I speak to you. (Re-printed)

far. How are we supposed to be encouraged? I’ve told our people here at the Center that apparently God knew we could make it with His help during these evil days because He had us be born in this time. He gives life and He takes it when it is our time to go...unless we do something to hasten our demise.

All of that having been said, so what are we as Jesus’ followers to do in this day? I’ll try to answer that for what Holy Spirit seemed to put upon my spirit.

Do we not all, sort of at least, know the definition of ‘require’ or ‘required’? It means ‘to insist upon, to demand.’ When we accept a job and the boss tells us we have to work, say, six hours a day for five days per week, in order to receive a paycheck on Friday afternoon, we understand that, right? If we buy an automobile from a dealership, and the final price is established and agreed upon, and we say we will pay in full, don’t we then become the owner of that vehicle when we pay the ‘required price.’ We understand that arrangement, right?

In God’s kingdom and through our becoming a member of God’s family, there are requirements that He and His Holy Word have outlined very clearly. To even get into His kingdom, the first requirement is ‘believe in our heart and confess with our mouth the Lordship of Jesus Christ, and believe God has raised the Sinless Son of God, Jesus Christ, as the Savior of the whole world because of His righteous life, His painful death on Calvary, and His glorious resurrection from the dead. There is absolutely no other way to become a truly born-again Christian unless and until we do this initial act Romans 10:9-10. It is the requirement—God’s requirement. It doesn’t matter how people are being told today that there are many ways and through other means to get into Heaven, other than receiving Jesus Christ as their personal Savior and Lord. It is an absolute lie and from the pit of hell.

Which brings me to the very core of my message in the midst of our nation in total chaos and many citizens so afraid, confused and floundering.

Required Faithfulness

Mentioning again the definition of require/requirement which is ‘to insist upon; to demand.’ And the word *faithfulness* which should cover both our natural and spiritual life has the meaning of ‘loyal, conscientious, accurate, reliable.’ The very opposite means ‘dishonest or disloyal, unreliable’ all of which exhibit faithlessness.

Forever and without fail, Father God, Jesus Christ and Holy Spirit have always been faithful. The Bible brings out and requires our faithfulness.

Deuteronomy 7:9, “Therefore, know that the LORD your God, He is God, the faithful God who keeps covenant and mercy for a thousand generations, with those who love Him and keep His commandments.”

This Scripture has proven true down through the centuries by those who obey it and those who dismiss it. One man who followed God with his Christian life, raised his family to honor God. When tracking, it was found that his descendants for many following generations produced presidents, university professors, others who contributed to this nation in positive ways. By comparison, another man who was evil, did not follow God nor teach his family to do so. His descendants cost the nation untold agony, jail and prison inmates, nothing good with generation after generation costing the nation finances and problems because he did not follow this Scripture and God’s promise from Deuteronomy.

Here is another great promise from Psalm 31:23, a Psalm of David, “Oh, love the LORD, all you His saints for the LORD preserves the faithful...”

The entire, tiny four chapters of the book of Ruth in our Bible has so much to say and tell about Ruth’s faithfulness to her mother-in-law, Naomi, even after having been raised in the pagan land of Moab. She left that homeland to go with Naomi to her home in

Israel. Her promise to Naomi, “I will go with you, never leave you, nor forsake you and where you live, I will live, and when you die I will be there. I will look after you, as we both are widows, and I will work and provide for you.” That is a lot for Ruth to promise in an unknown land. The outcome of her faithfulness, had her marry a very wealthy man who loved her and the great honor God bestowed on her to become the great, grandmother of King David from whose lineage Jesus Christ would come through virgin Mary.

God has ways and means that we have never thought of when we are faithful to Him, even when we do not see or understand how He is working in us and for us. He is actually THE Ways and Means Committee all by Himself!

Jesus Himself gives us a promise in Matthew 24:44-47 for our faithfulness. “Therefore, you also be ready for the Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect. Who then is a faithful and wise servant whom his master made ruler over his household, to give them food in due season. Blessed is that servant whom his master, when he comes, will find so doing.” And then Jesus, continuing this discourse, in 25:23 He says, for the faithful one, “Well done, good and faithful servant, you have been faithful over a few things, I will make you ruler over many things. Enter into the joy of your Lord. That is the final outcome of faithfulness.

A number of people I know, seeking to encourage me through the years, have said,

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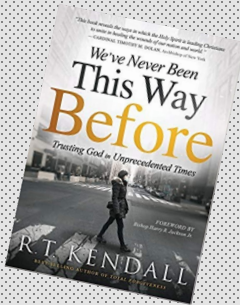
We’ve Never Been this Way BEFORE, Trusting God in Unprecedented Times
by R. T. Kendall

So easy to read and understand.

Up to date on events taking place in America right now

Giving great hope in these ‘never-before’ happenings.

(paper back, 122 pages)



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“*Retha, you have been so faithful in the church and for the Center. Staying with it for so many years, and having opposition but still being faithful.*” Of course, I really appreciate their kindness and sincerity, but I usually respond with the Scripture recorded in I Corinthians 4:2 which, to me, answers the question of all Christians’ need for faithfulness. Apostle Paul writes, “*It is **required** in stewards that one be found faithful.*” (my emphasis). For Christians, I don’t see it as a choice. It is not just for ministers and pastors, but it is our Christian spiritual obligation to be faithful.

We should love this Scripture with its incredible promise: “*If we confess our sins, He is **faithful** and just to forgive us of our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness*” I John 1:9

Psalm 37 gives us a roadmap for being faithful in this troublesome time: *Don’t fret, worry and stew about evil people*—mentioned three times in the first eight verses of this chapter; *Trust in the Lord and delight in His faithful promises* to His children; *Commit yourself totally into His care and keeping; Do not be angry* and forget responding in wrath against anyone; *REST and RELY* on the Lord and His faithfulness. We should probably read the first 11 verses of this Psalm every day and be faithful to God and His Word. The words from a song come to mind, “*He is all I need/He is all I need. Jesus is all I need...*”

We can make it for ‘*With God nothing will be impossible*’ Luke 1:37

I know I have given you a bunch of Scriptures, and I hope you are encouraged to just keep trusting Jesus and being faithful in your sphere of influence.

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NOVEMBER/DECEMBER 2020

This Month’s Offer

Trusted theologian R. T. Kendall has written another for-this-time, eye-opening, easy-to-read book, which, to me, is his very, very best. It is titled *We’ve Never Been This Way Before*. The title is taken from Joshua 3:4 where Joshua is seeking to lead the massive group of Israelites into their God-promised land. They are now standing on the edge of their Promised Land, and he says to them, “*You have never been this way before*” (Joshua 3:4). This word fits America right now.

To recap about Kendall, he was pastor of Westminster Chapel in London for 25 years, and has been home in America for several years.

His very timely book helps us navigate forward in these troublesome times for America. As you know, we are coping with extraordinary outbreaks of disease, racism, and upheavals never seen before.

Kendall answers questions, so succinctly, such as Where is God in all of this? What do Christians have to offer the world during these scary times? Did the devil cause these things? If God allowed these things to happen, then why? He challenges us to understand what God is saying to His people in this critical hour, the ways He has already equipped you to face these uncertainties, and how to know His plan for your future.

This is a brand-new book, but we have been able to get our order at a very discounted price. Please hear me: you do not want to miss reading this book. I read a lot of books, but this one is a real winner and an abiding encouragement in these evil days.
(See page 3 to order this revealing book)

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