

**Mary Craig**

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Mary Craig Ministries, Inc.

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Some themes have been developing in the last few weeks amid all the tension that continues throughout 2011. We're facing in the nation and in our world disasters and destruction, disappointments and dismay at unprecedented levels. Our news is filled with talk about the debt crisis, the lowering of U.S. credit ratings, riots in London, record-breaking heat, and the deepening tragedy of those fallen in Afghanistan. Hope and change has fast become hopelessness and spiraling deficiencies in all areas of life.

The spoiler is at work. We know we have been battling Apollyon, the king over death and destruction, since 2009. This "king" spirit joins with Leviathan, king over the children of pride, and the king of torment to forge a formidable foe. The spoiler goes forth to plunder, loot, ruin, devour, destroy, rob, assault, etc.

We're seeing the spoiler everywhere. It can be a little thing like throwing cold water on a testimony of God's gracious provision or of some amazing healing. It can be a big thing like shooting down a helicopter filled with the best of the world's fighting forces. It can be in our individual lives, in the church, in our cities, and nations.

Simultaneous to this, we at Craighouse have been talking about living in the presence of a holy God, and more particularly, in recent weeks, about humility and true greatness. My husband just preached on greatness, speaking of the world's greats, like Alexander the Great, and how the title goes back to the Persians (modern Iran) to Cyrus the Great, Darius the Great, etc. These went out conquering, hunting men's souls for slaves and booty for spoils.

And then there is Jesus Christ. The angel Gabriel announced that He would be great and would be called the Son of the Highest, that the Lord God would give to Him the throne of his father David, and that He would have a kingdom without end. (Luke 1.32, 33) Jesus' greatness grows from His humility, a humility the world doesn't understand.

8/11/2011

Jesus did not seek His own glory, but the glory of His Father. He lived in total submission to the Father's will, losing nothing by giving everything to God. He obeyed to the point of death on the Cross. His meekness is something Satan will never comprehend and sees only as stupidity and weakness.

Satan is full of "I will's." (See Isaiah 14.) He asserts his will to self-exaltation; but God exalted Jesus with a Name above every name such that at the Name of Jesus every knee will bow. (Philippians 2) Jesus allowed the Father to do in Him and through Him what He pleased, no matter what people said or did. He did not receive honor from people. He came to serve.

Pride goes before a fall and a haughty spirit before destruction. Pride opposes love as it parades itself, is all puffed up, and seeks its own. Pride wants the best place at the banquet and slaves at its beck and call. Pride wants greatness at any cost and relishes a lavish lifestyle of opulence. Pride sees no fault in itself and so blames everyone and everything else when it doesn't have its way. Pride looks in the mirror and sees perfection; for who is so glorious as pride? Pride likes the pomp, the parade, and being the center of attraction.

When pride rises in the hearts of men, the spoiler also rises. The spoiler devours prey with a ravenous appetite and lust for power. The spoiler pursues in order to overtake, to gratify personal ambition and desires. The spoiler captures and plunders. Lust fills the heart. The spoiler rushes greedily upon the spoil, taking, celebrating with eating, drinking, and dancing.



We who are believers must humble ourselves and pray. First, we need to heed a few warnings from the Word of God. "It is better to be humble in spirit with the lowly than to divide the spoil with the proud." (Proverbs 16.19) When God moves to correct His people, He often uses other nations as instruments "So as to deprive the needy of justice and rob the poor of My people of their rights, so that widows may be their spoil and that they may plunder the orphans." (Isaiah 10.2, speaking of Assyria) "But this is a people plundered and despoiled; all of them are trapped in caves, or are hidden away in prisons; they have become a prey with none to deliver them, and a spoil, with none to say, 'Restore!'" (Isaiah 42.22)

When God's people were stubborn, deaf and blind, they did not see that it was the LORD who gave Jacob for a spoil and Israel to the robbers. It was against the LORD that the people had sinned for they would not walk in His ways, neither were they obedient unto His law. So God poured out upon them the fury of His anger and the strength of battle. (Isaiah 42.18ff)

Second, we need to go beyond acknowledging our sin to repenting for our sins. (Isaiah 58) If you want to fast, fast from sin!



Third, we need to call upon the Name of the Lord, specifically the Arm of the LORD. God redeems with an outstretched arm and with great judgments. (Exodus 6.6) God delivers by His great power and outstretched arm (Deut. 9.29).

Fourth, when we pray, God reminds us of who He is and of His mighty acts of creation and redemption. We are reminded that God will help us and fight our battles.

Fifth, when we pray, we are to seek God's face and see Him. "For by their own sword they did not possess the land; and their own arm did not save them; but Your right hand, and Your arm, and the light of Your presence, for You did favor them." (Ps 44.3) It's not fair; it's favor, folks. God's hand establishes and His arm strengthens. (Ps 89.21)

The Arm of the LORD is revealed (Isaiah 53.1); for the Arm of the LORD is Jesus Christ, the suffering servant and Messiah.

And He saw that there was no man,  
And was astonished that there was no one to intercede;  
Then His own arm brought salvation to Him;  
And His righteousness upheld Him.  
Isaiah 59.16  
Cf. Isaiah 63.5

Sixth, when we pray, God explains things to us, as He did to Jeremiah. Jeremiah concluded that nothing is too difficult for God. (Jeremiah 32.17)

Seventh, when we seek God with our whole heart, humbling ourselves before Him, He grants grace. As He grants grace, He empowers revival, opening blind eyes and deaf ears and turning hearts to Jesus. He reveals the Arm of the LORD and gives us hope.

Jesus came taking captivity captive. His atoning death and subsequent resurrection means the spoiling of principalities and powers. He made a show of them openly and triumphed over them. (Colossians 2.15) Jesus came binding the strong one and taking his spoils. (Matthew 12.29) He is a fisher of men's souls, in order that they might be saved from the power of death and destruction. He came and comes in love, doing no harm.

It is time for the people of God to stop quoting 2 Chronicles 7.14 and actually do it. Judgment begins with the household of God. We stand at a precipice. An abyss of destruction waits unless we repent, turn to God, walk in true humility, and love one another. The world is raging in selfishness and pride. We must seek God for the grace to be meek and lowly, meekness being submitting to a holy God without reservation, without rebuttal, without resentment, without rudeness, without rebellion, etc.

God is our defense.

