**LIGHTS IN A DARK WORLD (#3)**

***Preparing For The Worst Case Scenario***

*“that you may become blameless and harmless, children of God without fault in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, among whom you shine as lights in the world”* - Phil. 2:15

“Be Prepared.”

When my sons were growing up I encouraged them to sign up for the Cub Scouts (where they could become Bobcats, Tigers, Wolves, and Bears), then to Webelos, and finally on to Boy Scouts. These stages of the BSA (Boy Scouts of America) program were wonderful for my boys. I became a “Den Leader” (as you know, lions, wolves and bears live in dens) to encourage my sons to keep advancing in the Scouts in hopes that they would one day earn their Eagle Badge, the highest rank in the BSA. They never became Eagles, but their experience (at least to this proud papa) was priceless.

The motto of the Scouts is simple: “Be Prepared!” The BSA was designed to train young men to grow in their character and be prepared for any and every event in life. While a Scout leader I wanted to help the eight boys in my den to be prepared for the unexpected twists and turns coming in their life. So we took classes on things like Orienteering (finding your way out of a forest using only a compass, or even just the sun or moon), Fire Starting (using only flint and rock), and Igloo Building (in order to survive a snow storm… we live in Minnesota after all).

To make things even more exciting for them I bought a book called *The Worst Case Scenario Survival Handbook*. It teaches you how to be prepared for scenarios in life that are both life threatening and out-of-the-ordinary. They give the extremes (i.e. worst case) you might find yourself confronting and explain how to escape. Things such as what do you if you encounter a lion, alligator or poisonous snake. Things such as what to do if your parachute doesn’t open, how to land a plane if the pilot faints, or how to escape from a sinking car in a flood. It even tells you how to deliver a baby if you fail to reach the hospital in time. Their motto is: You Just Never Know… So Be Prepared!

While I never visualized myself as facing a lion or snake, in reality that worst-case scenario is happening to me (and you) on a daily basis. The old saying, “It’s a jungle out there” is truer than we realize. That “jungle” is where we face the greatest dangers of our life. The very worst-case scenarios that any of us will ever confront are not the physical dangers of life-and-death, but the spiritual dangers facing “*the devil… a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour*” (I Pet. 5:8). He is “*the great dragon, that serpent of old, called the Devil and Satan*, *who deceives the whole world*” (Rev. 12:9).

That lion, that dragon, that serpent is at this very moment roaring, breathing fire, and hissing right outside your door. He takes no days off in pursuit of your soul. While this is very intimidating, God has given us a manual, a worst-case scenario survival guide, to “*resist the devil … steadfast in the faith … and he will flee from you*” (I Pet. 5:9; Jam. 4:7). Unlike the mathematical probabilities of surviving a failed parachute jump, the likelihood of surviving this lion, dragon and snake are very real, even probable.

Joshua Piven, author of the above mentioned survival book, tells you, when suddenly confronted by a mountain lion while hiking, to open your shirt or coat as wide as possible to intimidate the beast by your huge size (and good luck kids, I’m right behind you --- I’m the coward who says “I don’t have to outrun the bear, I just have to outrun you”). But dear young people, when faced with that roaring lion who tempts you to look at pornography, or hang with those who have no moral scruples, remember the Lord’s survival guide.

No, don’t stand there and open your shirt to intimidate him, but instead, run for your life! “*FLEE Fornication*!” (I Cor. 6:18). “*FLEE youthful lusts*!” (2 Tim. 2:22). “*FLEE these things and pursue righteousness*!” (I Tim. 6:11). Yes, there are plenty of times, when facing Satan, we are told to “*Stand*” and to “*Resist*” (Eph. 6:10-17; Jam. 4:7), but in facing sexual immorality there is only one word from the ultimate Survivor who never once fell to this lion – FLEE!

Joseph, while being seduced by Potiphar’s wife, left his outer garment in her clutching fingers and simply ran for his life! In this young man’s worst-case scenario here is what the survival manual teaches: *“But it happened about this time, when Joseph went into the house to do his work, and none of the men of the house was inside, that she caught him by his garment, saying, “Lie with me.” But he left his garment in her hand and* ***fled*** *and* ***ran*** *outside”* (Gen. 39:11-12). You know the rest of the story. He not only survived, but thrived.

At my high school graduation party when all of my senior class met at the local YMCA for one last time together, I was suddenly approached by one of my classmates. To my shock and horror I suddenly realized she was trying to get me to go to her car for a fling (i.e. a euphemism for fornication). One problem (actually, there are many in this scenario), we had all piled our shoes at the lobby door. All I knew to do was what I remembered Joseph doing, RUN! I bolted for the door, sock-footed, and ran five miles all the way home (Note: I had run a 4:39 mile just two weeks before at the District track meet so there was no way she was going to catch me). While I had to explain to my folks why my socks were “holy,” and my shoes were missing, I was relieved I would never see that girl again! You see kids, it’s good to learn those Bible stories, they could just save your life (and soul).

Young man, young lady, take Mr. Piven’s advice to “be prepared, because you just never know.” His warning might save your life from drowning in a submerged car or warding off an attacking shark. But far more crucial to your survival is being spiritually prepared by recognizing the stalking lion who seeks to devour your soul. By taking Christ’s advice you are listening to the very One who survived every temptation and now “*is able to aid those who are tempted*” (Heb. 2:18).

By surviving the stalking lion’s attacks you will have the power to “***shine as lights in the world***.” This little Christian light of mine, I’m gonna let it shine. – Rick