

Partners In Courage, February 2016

Prairie Dog Wisdom

Right Responses In The Shadow of Death

Sermon by Wes Daughenbaugh

INTRODUCTION: God gives a measure of wisdom to his creatures, enough to survive and thrive. People can observe the wisdom God has given to one species and apply it to their own situations.

Examples: Proverbs 6:6-8 **Go to the ant, you sluggard; consider its ways and be wise! It has no commander, no overseer or ruler, yet it stores its provisions in summer and gathers its food at harvest.**

Proverbs 30:26-28 **Hyraxes are creatures of little power, yet they make their home in the crags; locusts have no king, yet they advance together in ranks; a lizard can be caught with the hand, yet it is found in king's palaces.**

**** What is so wise about a lizard? When it comes to a wall it just goes up and over. When walled out, it finds a crack to get in. It doesn't stop at obstacles.

These are just a few of the examples of wisdom King Solomon observed in nature. 1 Kings 4:33 **He spoke about plant life, from the cedar of Lebanon to the hyssop that grows out of walls. He also spoke about animals, and birds, reptiles and fish.**

Although the brains of these creatures are tiny in comparison to our brains, God gave each species a small part of his infinite wisdom, and when we observe them, we can learn wisdom from them.

1. OBSERVE THE WISDOM OF THE PRAIRIE DOG.

The Bible says, **"Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death I will fear no evil, for you are with me; your rod and your staff, they comfort me"** (Psalms 23:4 ESV).

**** When death is near, it casts a shadow, showing its approach. Those who notice the shadow can do something about it in time to avoid death coming upon them. Proverbs 22:3 **The prudent sees danger and hides himself, but the simple go on and suffer for it.** This verse is repeated again in Proverbs 27:12 **The prudent sees danger and hides himself, but the simple go on and suffer for it.** Did God's Spirit make a mistake to have this proverb repeated or is the redundancy for our sake, a double reminder to have the right response to approaching danger? I believe God wants each of us to desire to be among the prudent who see danger and have the right response.

**** I grew up in Western South Dakota on a cattle ranch, where in my youth I had occasion to observe prairie dogs. If you don't know what one looks like, do a Google search. They are a cute looking kind of ground squirrel and they live together in "towns." They eat grass like cows and if left to multiply, they can destroy the pasture a rancher needs for his cattle.

Prairie dogs have many natural enemies who desire to eat them: snakes, weasels, badgers, coyotes, wolves, hawks, owls and eagles. Something that wants to kill and eat a prairie dog is often casting a shadow over the "towns" these little creatures live in. Yet, in spite of all these natural enemies, prairie dogs thrive and can virtually take over vast acreages. The only thing that really thins them out would be diseases, or modern man with poison oats.

**** WHY ARE PRAIRIE DOGS SO WISE?

First, a prairie dog digs a deep borrow. Their holes go straight down for about two feet and then angle off. The prairie dog can sit above this hole and "bark" or "chirp" at danger. When the danger gets too close they drop out of sight in a split second, faster than a fireman can slide down a pole.

Every single borrow has at least two entrances. The prairie dog always has a back door. When a snake or a weasel comes in the front door, the prairie dog runs out the back door. The back door feature is build long before the danger comes.

Prairie dogs live in community with each other. This is so that they can help alert each other to danger. When a coyote approaches and one prairie dog sees the danger, that little guy will start to “bark” which sounds something like a chirp. He’ll sit over his hole, his black tipped tail will be jerking in a reflex that warns his fellow prairie dogs visually and his “bark or chirp” warns them audibly.

When one prairie dog sounds out a warning, all the others take notice and they all start to bark. This is part of their God given wisdom. They alert each other. They would never just run down their hole and leave their neighbors vulnerable to attack. If danger is near, they’ll keep sounding out the warning until the last minute and THEN dive down into the safety of their borrows.

Prairie dogs watch out for each other. They are very alert. They may be eating grass, but if one sees danger the alarm goes out and in seconds the entire town of perhaps thousands will all be chirping out a warning, with every family member either inside the safety of the borrow or sitting atop the hole, ready to drop out of sight in a split second. It’s really hard for any predator to sneak up on a prairie dog.

2. THE SHADOW OF DEATH IS OVER AMERICA

Imagine a prairie dog town in a safe prairie where there were no snakes, weasels, badgers, coyotes, wolves, hawks, owls or eagles. Do you suppose that after a few generations the prairie dogs would become less diligent? Perhaps they’d quit making back doors to their underground borrows. Perhaps they’d quit living in community and wander off to do their own thing. Perhaps it would become very unfashionable to “bark”, sounding out an alarm, and thus irritating their neighbors.

Now imagine this generation of prairie dogs being re-introduced to natural enemies. Suppose all those predators came back. If they did, and the natural wisdom of the prairie dogs had been abandoned, their enemies would destroy them quickly.

**** We’ve had quite a few generations of Americans who have lived in great safety compared to the rest of the world. It’s hard for an American to realize just how many natural enemies want to kill us. Being prepared with an emergency plan is not fashionable. Barking out an alert when you see danger is not fashionable. Helping your neighbors survive attacks and thinking of the safety of others is not fashionable. *In other words, Americans haven’t seen much danger and so prudence has been lost.* Not many appreciate the sounding of an alarm. An alarm is considered an irritant rather than a helpful kindness.

**** Because of the wisdom God put in the little prairie dogs they can live in happiness and security in spite of their many enemies. When the shadow of a hawk or the shadow of a coyote comes—they dive for cover. They notice the shadows of approaching death and alert each other. Then they dive for cover and frustrate their enemies. Death leaves to cast its shadow somewhere else.

You and I have not had to live in the shadow of death. That has changed and because this has changed, our responses must change. Many enemies are within our country now, with terrorist cells in every state and more coming in across our open borders. Many nations with demon-oppressed leaders now have weapons of destruction that could destroy us. Even crafty individual hackers have the power to do vast damage to us, and we would not even know who to retaliate against. As I pondered how to sound an alarm to approaching danger, God brought the prairie dog illustration to mind.

3. SEE THE DANGER AND BARK.

When one prairie dog sees danger, they bark and sound an alarm. Then every prairie dog who hears the alarm joins in until thousands are barking. I see a great danger and it would be wise if we all started sounding out the alarm until something is done about it.

**** We have a huge vulnerability as a nation. While there are many approaching dangers, there is one in particular we should be keenly aware of. If the electrical power was to go off in your area for six months, could you survive? There has never been a nation in history more dependent upon electricity as America. That means there has never been a nation more vulnerable to attack.

**** Do you have a burrow with a back door, a plan for survival if the electric grid went down for six months? NO. I'm assuming you do NOT. Most assume such a survival plan is not needed. This is a false assumption.

**** Recently I read a book called LIGHTS OUT by Ted Koppel, the famous reporter for ABC News who hosted the Night Line news program for many years. Mr. Koppel would be considered a liberal democrat, and not especially religious. He's not warning because he saw a prophetic vision. He has thoroughly investigated the vulnerability of our three national power grids and is sounding out a warning to all who will listen, telling us that there is NO GOVERNMENT PLAN in place to deal with a cyber attack on our three power grids that could hit us at any moment.

Isaiah 26:12 For thus the Lord said to me: "Go, set a watchman; let him announce what he sees."

Ezekiel 33:1-6 The word for the Lord came to me: "Son of man, speak to your people and say to them, If I bring the sword upon a land, and the people of the land take a man from among them, and make him their watchman, and if he sees the sword coming upon the land and blows the trumpet and warns the people, then if anyone who hears the sound of the trumpet does not take warning, and the sword comes and takes him away, his blood shall be upon his own head. He heard the sound of the trumpet and did not take warning; his blood shall be upon himself. But if he had taken warning, he would have saved his life. But if the watchman sees the sword coming and does not blow the trumpet, so that the people are not warned, and the sword comes and takes any one of them, that person is taken away in his iniquity, but his blood I will require at the watchman's hand.

**** We have spiritualized this so that a few preachers still warn about sin, but there is a need to warn not just of spiritual danger, but of natural danger as well. It is not a good thing to see danger and just dive in your own borrow. If the power grid went down for an extended period of time we'd soon find out how necessary it is for a community approach to danger, not just an individual approach.

**** Each prairie dog digs it's own borrow with a back door escape tunnel. But each prairie dog works in community with others to stay safe. We need individual disaster plans and we need community plans—national plans in the case of such emergencies. I believe, if we were truly prudent in the Biblical sense, we'd all see the danger to our power grids and start barking out an alarm until our leaders developed backup systems and contingency plans for great national emergencies.

4. THE DANGER OF DARKNESS

Here's some quotes from LIGHTS OUT: "Darkness. Extended periods of darkness, longer and more profound than anyone now living in one of America's great cities has ever known. As power shuts down there is darkness and the sudden loss of electrical conveniences. As batteries lose power, there is the more gradual failure of cellphones, portable radios, and flashlights. Emergency generators provide pockets of light and power, but there is little running water anywhere. In cities with water towers on the roofs of high-rise buildings, gravity keeps the flow going for two, perhaps three days. When this runs out, taps go dry; toilets no longer flush. Emergency supplies of bottled water are too scarce to use for anything but drinking, and there is nowhere to replenish the supply. Disposal of human waste becomes a critical issue within days.

"Supermarket and pharmacy shelves are empty in a matter of hours. It is a shock to discover how quickly a city can exhaust its food supplies. Stores do not readily adopt to panic buying, and many city dwellers, accustomed to ordering out, have only scant supplies at home. There is no immediate resupply, and people become desperate.

"For the first couple of days, emergency personnel are overwhelmingly engaged in rescuing people trapped in elevators. Medicines are running out. Home care patients reliant on ventilators and

other medical machines are already dying. One city has hoisted balloons marking the sites of generators, hauled out of storage to serve new emergency centers. Almost everyone needs some kind of assistance, but no one has adequate information.

“This is a society that regards information, the ability to communicate instantly, as an entitlement. The tissue of emails, texts, and phone calls that held our social networks together is tearing. There is a growing awareness that this power outage extends far beyond any particular city and its suburbs. It may extend over several states. Tens of millions of people appear affected. Fuel is beginning to run out. Gas stations without backup generators are unable to operate their pumps. Those with generators are running out of fuel and shutting down.

“The amount of water, food, and fuel consumed by a city of several million inhabitants is staggering. Emergency supplies are sufficient only for a matter of days. The assumption that the city, the state, or even the federal government has the plans and the wherewithal to handle this particular crisis is being replaced by a terrible sense that people are increasingly on their own. When that awareness takes hold it leads to a contagion of panic and chaos.

There are emergency preparedness plans in place for earthquakes and hurricanes, heat waves and ice storms. There are plans for power outages for a few days, affecting as many as several million people. But if a highly populated area was without electricity for a period of months or even weeks, there is no master plan for the civilian population.”

That is the beginning of Ted Koppel’s book LIGHTS OUT. I urge each of you to buy that book. I can only give you the briefest summary in a sermon like this, a mere sampling of wisdom’s warning.

**** Briefly, there are three kinds of attacks that can come on our power grids: 1. Physical attacks by terrorists 2. Cyber attacks and 3. EMP attacks. Security at power stations is minimal. At 1:00AM on April 16, 2013 terrorists attacked Pacific Gas and Electric Company’s Metcalf Transmission Substation, a few miles south of San Jose, California. Attackers using only AK-47 assault rifles knocked out seventeen giant transformers in a nineteen-minute attack. They were never caught. This substation provides power to Silicon Valley. It took twenty-seven days to bring the substation back online.

Jon Wellinghoff, who was chairman of the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission says that if nine of our country’s most critical substations were knocked out at the same time, it could cause a blackout encompassing most of the United States.

**** CYBER ATTACKS: “On April 13, 2010, a bipartisan group of ten former national security, intelligence, and energy officials, including former secretaries of defense James Schlesinger and William Perry, former directors of central intelligence John Deutsch and James Woolsey, and former White House national security advisors Stephen Hadley and Robert McFarlane, sent a confidential letter, not previously released, to the chairman and ranking member of the House Committee on Energy and Commerce. Written in support of the pending Grid Reliability and Infrastructure Defense Act, the letter came to some blunt conclusions: ‘Virtually all of our civilian critical infrastructure—including telecommunications, water, sanitation, transportation, and healthcare—depends on the electrical grid. The grid is extremely vulnerable to disruption by a cyber-or other attack. Our adversaries already have the capability to carry out such an attack. The consequences of a large scale attack on the U.S. grid would be catastrophic for our national security and economy. Under current conditions, timely reconstitution of the grid following a carefully targeted attack if particular equipment is destroyed would be impossible; and according to government experts, would result in widespread outages for at least months to two years or more, depending on the nature of the attack.’”

“The House passed the proposed legislation. It has been stuck in the Senate ever since!” (Page 15-16)

**** EMP EVENTS. EMP stands for Electromagnetic pulse. If an atomic or hydrogen bomb was exploded in the atmosphere over our continent it would fry almost all electrical equipment. Iran and/or North Korea could launch such an attack from cargo ships off our coasts, using just old Scud rockets. Of course, China and Russia have nuclear submarines and could launch such an attack at any time. All of our military bases now use electricity from the common grid system. They used to have independent

power-sources, but to save money, those were phased out. An EMP would cripple every air base, naval base and army base. If an EMP attack was launched, it is estimated that 90% of Americans would die in a year's time-even WITHOUT a physical invasion of foreign troops.

Rather than destroying our fertile farmlands with nuclear radiation from bombing our cities, it would make sense for our enemies to merely destroy our three power grids with EMP's, and then invade a virtually defenseless nation that would be starving and in utter chaos. It is estimated that our national electric grids could be hardened against EMP attacks for as little as two billion dollars. Yet such legislation has not made it out of committee and those charged most directly with protecting the nation's security are ambivalent about the actual danger of such an attack.

5. WHY A CYBER ATTACK IS MOST LIKELY IMMINENT

"The federal agencies best equipped to monitor infrastructure for signs of cyber attack are precluded from doing so by laws that were designed to preserve privacy. Where there are breaches of infrastructure security, corporations are protected by law against any mandate to share that information with competitors or the federal government." (Page 27) (No one is allowed to "bark" out a warning.)

"Power is often generated in one location by one company, fed over a separately managed transmission network, and ultimately passed on to yet another company for final delivery to the consumer. Because the system's maintenance and protection reside in so many different hands, though, and because it's complexity has made each player more dependent on computerized control systems, the grid is also more vulnerable than it used to be. New forms of interconnections between and among firms create new pathways through which malicious cyber attacks may travel."

"Smaller companies with lean profit margins are simply not inclined to spend a great deal on cyber security. The weakest links in this system tend to be the smaller companies with the poorest security and maintenance practices." "If you bring down the small companies in the right order it could initiate a domino-like cascade effect, threatening the entire network."

**** A WORD PICTURE. "Imagine a giant balloon attached to a thousand different valves. Some of the valves introduce air into the balloon, while others extract it. Take too much air out and the balloon collapses. Put too much in and it explodes. Now imagine a computerized system that keeps it all in balance, so that the balloon remains perfectly inflated. That's a very crude analogue to the system that keeps the electric power industry in balance. If you could hack into that computerized system and throw supply and demand out of balance, it could have devastating consequences." (Page 36)

"Almost all operational phases of thousands of power companies are interconnected. They are run using the same software systems, manufactured by a handful of companies. This software was designed and installed before the notion of cyber attacks had even occurred to anyone. The Internet was not designed to keep anyone out. It was created to be universally accessible."

**** During the administration of George W. Bush, Israel launched a cyber attack against a critical element of Iran's nuclear program, setting it back for as much as two years. They introduced a computer worm code-named Stuxnet that altered the speed of Iran's centrifuges so that they self-destructed. Struxnet concealed the sabotage by secretly recording what normal operations at the nuclear plant looked like and then played those recordings back to the plant operators so things looked normal while the centrifuges were actually tearing themselves apart.

In theory, the administrative network is "air-gapped" from the operational side of each power company, meaning there is no physical connection between the two. This makes many people assume cyber attacks are not possible. Ted Koppel explains, "Every time a worker brings in a thumb drive or laptop from home and hooks it up to an 'isolated' system, the mobility of workers bridges the air gap." As workers and users of the two systems transfer work to their personal computers at home, or from their smartphones or other interconnected networks back to what is supposed to be an isolated, secure system, they run the risk of infecting the operational network. Would-be attackers, operating on what is sometimes referred to as the "Sneakernet," can introduce their malware, their viral programs, by way of

an employee's insecure iPhone or thumb drive. The insecure thumb drive becomes the cyber equivalent of a tiny exposed portion of a nurses neck who catches Ebola by one virus touching the exposed place."

6. LARGE POWER GENERATORS ARE HARD TO REPLACE

In order for electricity to move over great distances at maximum efficiency, its voltage has to be cranked up. That function is performed by step-up transformers. *No nation in the world has a larger base of installed large powered transformers than the United States, and that base is aging.* These critical components are on average thirty-eight to forty years old! There are tens of thousands of these generators. But they are very difficult to replace. Each is custom built. Each costs \$3 million to \$10 million, and almost none are interchangeable. There are only a handful of plants in the United States capable of building a LPT (Large Power Transformer). Seventy five percent of those purchased for the U.S. energy sector must be procured overseas. The lead-time from production to delivery and installation is between one to two years and never less than six months!

Transformers are enormous, weighing from 400,000 to 600,000 pounds. Many were delivered years ago by railroad freight cars where now, many of those rail lines no longer exist. To move them by highway requires a modular device seventy feet long with twelve axles and 190 wheels. The unit occupies two lanes of traffic and requires special permits from each state through which the transport will pass. Because of the enormous dimensions and weight involved, these special permits often call for the prior inspection of various bridges and other pieces of infrastructure along the way.

There is almost no back-up supply of these generators. Some larger power companies have a few LPTs in storage, but the smaller power companies do not. *No government plan exists to bring in new large power transformers in the event that several or many were damaged through coordinated physical attacks or a large-scale cyber attack.*

In the book LIGHTS OUT reporter Ted Koppel goes into great detail explaining why the electrical grid is so vulnerable to cyber attacks, why the electrical industry is so far behind on cyber security, and he also reveals that there is no effective government plan to deal with a "lights out" type of disaster where the grid would go down for ten to eleven states. There is no plan to feed people or evacuate people. Disaster plans are in place for lesser events like earthquakes, tornadoes, hurricanes but not something widespread that could mean six months to two years of no electrical power.

Experts tell us that Russia and China are inside our grid, mapping its vulnerabilities. North Korea and Iran are on a similar path, both intent upon the ultimate destruction of the United States.

7. RIGHT RESPONSES IN THE SHADOW OF DEATH.

1. GET INFORMED.**** I read the novel ONE SECOND AFTER which describes what life would be like in the aftermath of an EMP attack on our country. After one year without electrical power about 85% of the population had died. It's a sobering read but one I recommend that you read, never the less.

I believe everyone should read Ted Koppel's book LIGHTS OUT. We've all got to see the danger, like the prudent, like the prairie dogs.

2. INFORM AS MANY AS YOU CAN

Next, we all need to start BARKING! Sound off about this danger. Talk to everyone you can. Buy Ted Koppel's book in quantity and give one to your Mayor, your governor, your congressman, your Senator, your county commissioners and the executives at your local power company. I can remember seeing an entire town of prairie dogs, hundreds of them, all at the entrance of their borrows and barking at once—with every member of that vast community AWARE of the danger.

You may not know how to fix it, BUT YOU CAN BARK!

3. SHOW INDIVIDUAL RESPONSIBILITY

Each prairie dog digs their own borrow with their own back door tunnel. Sure, if the grid went down armed gangs would be looking for food to steal. The ideal would be to have millions of people who have stored food to share.

I want to buy a “water tote.” These large plastic containers hold 275 gallons of water. Rain barrels can be attached to gutters coming off the roof of my house. With the water from a hot tub, rain barrels, and one large water tote on our patio we’d be able to flush toilets and take sponge baths for a long time.

Everyone should have a very good water purifier, one that works without electrical power.

Everyone should have as much stored food as possible, can openers, and a way to prepare food—like propane camping stoves. If you have critical medicine you need to survive, you ought to get some extra just in case. Could you install a wood stove and have a stockpile of wood? Have extra warm clothing available in case of an outage in the winter.

4. LEARN AS MUCH AS YOU CAN AS FAST AS YOU CAN IN REGARDS TO SURVIVAL, AND DISASTER PREPARATION.

Hosea 4:6 My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge.

Isaiah 5:13 Therefore my people go into exile for lack of knowledge; their honored men go hungry, and their multitude is parched with thirst.

Spiritual knowledge of what pleases God is supreme. However, if we no longer know how to store or prepare food without electricity, how to store water, use hand tools, or administer our own first aid we could experience far more suffering.

If you go to a Barnes and Noble bookstore, there is an entire section of books on preparedness. If you can get in some kind of a group that studies and practices this, then get in that group, get a mentor and start learning. For instance, learn how to can food, like your pioneer grandparents did. Learn how to garden and grow some of your own food.

5. YOU CAN ALL INCREASE YOUR TIMES OF PRAYER AND PRAY THAT GOD WILL HELP THOSE IN AUTHORITY TO DO THE RIGHT THINGS TO ENSURE OUR SAFETY.

Jesus said, **“Pray that your flight may not be in winter or on a Sabbath. For then there shall be great tribulation such as has not been from the beginning of the world until now”** (Matthew 24:20). I quote this verse to show you that prayer affects even prophetic events stated in advance in scripture. If prayer can modify such huge end time events, then we should be in prayer that if such an attack happens, it would not be in the winter.

Luke 21:36 “But stay awake at all times, praying that you may have strength to escape all these things that are going to take place, and to stand before the Son of Man.” (Pray for spiritual, mental and physical strength, so that we can stand as servants before Jesus, waiting our next assignment.)

We need to cry out to God that he will move upon our leaders to move quickly and effectively to change the present situation and do the right things to protect us.

1 Timothy 2:1-3 ESV First of all, then, I urge that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgiving be made for all people, for kings and all who are in high positions, that we may lead a peaceful and quiet life, godly and dignified in every way. This is good in the sight of God our Savior, who desires all people to be saved and to come to a knowledge of the truth.”

Ephesians 6:18 Praying in the Spirit, with all prayer and supplication. To that end keep alert with all perseverance, making supplication for all the saints. Like the prairie dogs, we should keep alert, but we don’t just have to “bark” or chirp. We can PRAY. We must pray that God will help all our fellow believers to have provision and protection and most of all, God’s presence.

6. LEAD THE WAY FOR COMMUNITY ACTION

Prairie dogs live and thrive in community. Your church is a community. Does it have a plan to sustain its members in a large-scale crisis? Your extended family is a small community. If your children and grandchildren live nearby, do some family planning together. If you are part of a neighborhood

group, any service group or part of a city council see if you can lead the way for creating some kind of disaster plan. Leaders see what needs to be done! Rise up and lead!

**** I preached once for First Assembly of God in Joplin, Missouri. The church had just made a contingency plan for a possible tornado event. Two weeks later, in a Sunday night service, a tornado came. They worked the plan. They ran to the coat closets with the most support to the walls. Children laid down on the floor, adults laid on top of them. The storm ripped off the roof of the church in a direct hit, but no one was harmed or injured. How different the result would have been if no emergency plan had been in place!

7. LIVE UNDER A DIFFERENT SHADOW.

Psalms 91 talks about abiding in the Shadow of the Almighty. *His shadow is a lot bigger than the shadow of death.* The perfect love of God, knowing how much he loves us and loving him back with all of our hearts—that is the kind of love that casts out all fear.

**** I believe that we should be wise in physical preparation. However, I always say, “Your only real security is your ability to get an answer to prayer.” I could be stranded across the United States from my family in some crisis, far away from stored food and water. I want to live in such love for God that “I fear no evil for Thou art with me.” I want to live in such a way that his angels are given charge of me to keep me in all my ways.

**** I read a new book by missionary to Mozambique, Africa-- Heidi Baker. She tells of how she lives in the constant shadow of death, yet without fear, in the security of God’s loving care. We need to desire great intimacy with God and pursue that. Jesus said, **“I am the resurrection and the life. Whoever believes in me, though he die, yet shall he live, and everyone who lives and believes in me shall never die,”** (John 11:26).

Miracles happen for responsible people who have taken their responsibility as far as it would go. After that, God picks up the responsibility. That’s why the Manna stopped falling when the Israelites crossed into Canaan from the wilderness. When they could provide food, God stopped the supernatural flow of bread from heaven. In Egypt they had to work for food, but in the wilderness they did not. *Therefore, we just do what we can to prepare for times of chaos and turmoil, while trusting that ultimately only God will be able to keep us.* However, he’s not likely to pick up responsibility for those who have shown none! We must do our part first, be as responsible as we can, and then believe God for whatever miracles are necessary. I do not want to be like the simple ones who keep going and do not see danger, those who see no need for prudent action BEFORE a great crisis.

Proverbs 11:4 **Riches do not profit in the day of wrath, but righteousness delivers from death.** If you live in sin, all the best plans for self-preservation would be in vain. If God targets someone for judgment there is no escape. Spiritual preparation is always the MOST important kind of preparation.

**** I want to close this brief message with this true story. My first book was called SWEETHEARTS and PARTNERS. It was about bus ministry and the cover had a picture of two beautiful children, sitting on my lap, a little girl and her little brother. I told these kids that if they behaved well at the photographer’s shop that I would take them to a toy store and get them each a toy. They behaved very well, so afterward we went to a toy store. The little boy let go of my hand and ran around the entire store, pointing to the largest most expensive toys at the top of each shelf. He wanted me to buy the most expensive ones. The little girl walked around holding my hand and said, “I don’t need a toy. Just buy something for my brother. I just like being with you.” Oh, how I wanted to buy her the ENTIRE TOY STORE. Please be like that little girl. Delight in spending time with God. Increase your time with God. He can show you the future. He can reveal his will and give you spectacular faith. His nearness will fill you with peace no matter what happens. And for those who delight in his fellowship, he will give the ENTIRE TOY STORE—the Kingdom of God in all of its fullness. Luke 12:32 ESV **Fear not, little flock, for it is your Father’s good pleasure to give you the kingdom.**

I LOVE YOU. GOD BLESS YOU.