



Turbulent Times

Airplane turbulence is not my favorite thing. Flying west right into the typical airstream coming from the west often creates a bit of turbulence, which was the case as I traveled to a conference in Arizona. It was not a comfortable flight. It was very stressful. As I prepared to return home I was hopeful, with the west wind at our back, we would simply sail smoothly home, but that was not the case. What can we do in turbulent times?

This uncomfortable, bumpy, roller coaster ride feeling in your gut is not found only on airplanes, is it? No. This reaction comes with a variety of circumstances. Consider the upsetting news reports of violence abroad and in our communities every day. Families experience unsettling times due to illness within the family, financial stress, marital strain and parenting challenges and these are just a few examples.

If we look back in history we see that turbulent times are not exclusive to today. Times like these have existed throughout history. Recently, my husband and I watched a movie titled, Woodlawn. It is a true story set in Alabama during the 1970's. The movie begins with some news clips from those years and I would have thought I was listening to the news reports of today (if it weren't for the hair and clothing styles). I was taken aback by the familiarity of the headlines.

As a teenager in the early 1970's just being a teenager, I was oblivious to the events happening in my own state let alone the events happening in Alabama. Not only was I unaware of the violence and chaos going on, but I was also unaware of the power God's love had on that community. I strongly encourage you to watch this movie because even more impactful than the reminder that there have been turbulent times throughout history was the way God's love brought peace to many people living in Alabama at the time.

God's love was unknown to many of the young people there who were forced to take part in the integration of schools, sports and social activities. In the midst of this chaos one man felt called to share God's love in unexpected places and it grew. It grew to a point where it could not be contained. Those who accepted love and forgiveness as the answer to violence found peace. What hope! Could it be that

our world, our communities, and our families are in need of finding love and forgiveness once more?

I invite you to search your heart. If you have love and forgiveness in your heart then you could have a positive effect on the world, on your community, and in your families during unsettled times. Are you being called to share this love and forgiveness as an example for others? What can we do in turbulent times? We can be loving and forgiving. We can reach out to others and share God's love and forgiveness so that they will be supported as they journey through turbulent times.

Questions to ponder:

- When have I experienced an unsettled feeling in my gut?
- What helps me work through times of turbulence?
- How is God calling me to help others to cope with difficult times?
- Where can I find strength to weather the storms of life?

May God's Peace be Yours,
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"I have said these things to you, that in me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation. But take heart; I have overcome the world."

—John 16:33