

In the Barn!

Barneys Newsletter



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The Heavenly City

glistening along the wave tops somehow softens the harshness of the straight-edged buildings and car horns accompanied by even harder sounds that clang throughout modern cities. As Joe spoke from Hebrews 12 & 13, he painted a similar contrast. We read:

Verse 18 For you have not come to what could be touched, to a blazing fire, to darkness, gloom, and storm, to the blast of a trumpet, and the sound of words.

Verse 22 Instead, you have come to Mount Zion, to the city of the living God (the heavenly Jerusalem), to myriads of angels, a festive gathering...

The writer to the Hebrews points out the contrast between the two main covenants within the Bible. We who now live in the second covenant need to understand the massive difference we have from the Israelites. The Israelites stood at the foot of Mt. Sinai and heard God's voice, and that voice so terrified them that they wanted to run and never hear it again. It

I love walking around the city of Sydney at night, especially along the water as this makes a somewhat odd contrast of perspective. The lights and logos dance across the ebbs and waves of the water entralling the eyes and painting a serenely beautiful scene that appears to mock the frenetic activity often taking place around the city. The sound of gently lapping water with its distorted reflections

**by Adam
Richards**

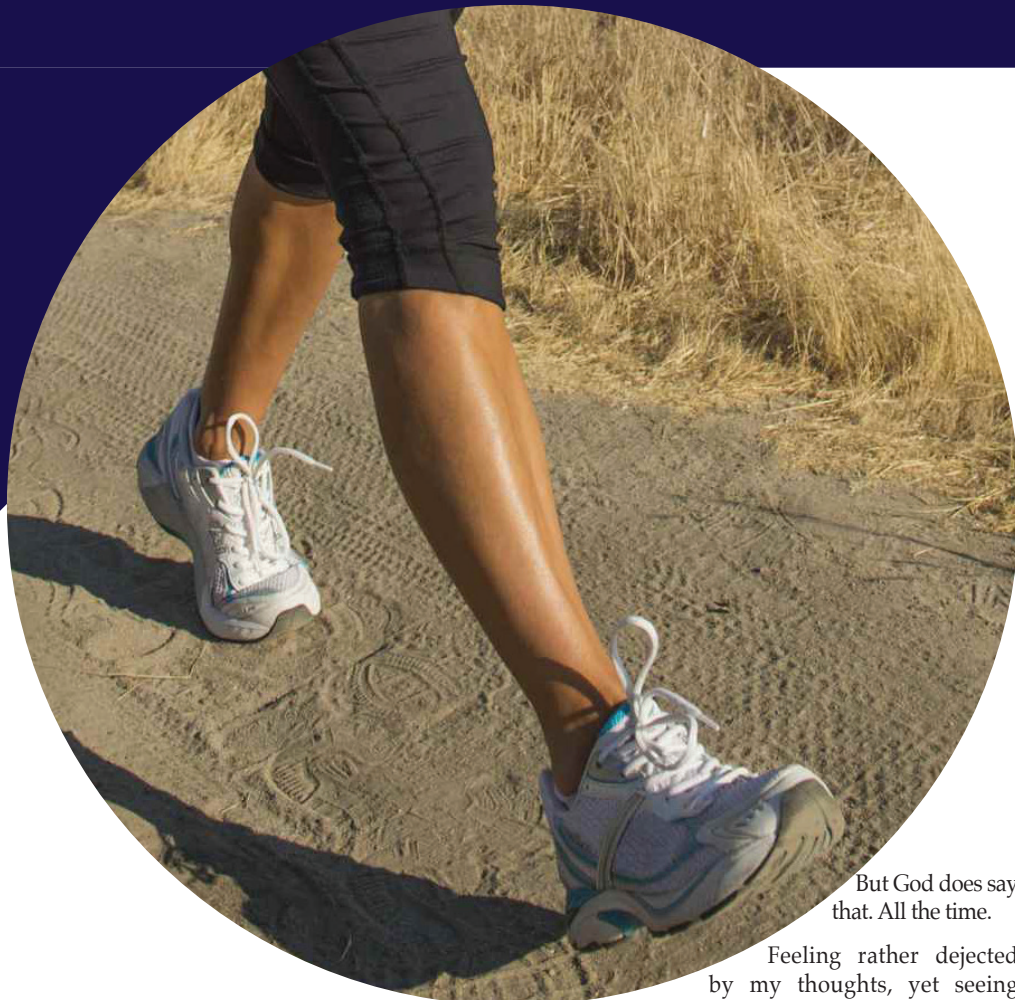
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by Kathy Hansen

Friday morning. Another work week limping towards its inevitable conclusion. Another week of things not done, of deadlines missed.

In fact, I very rarely give deadlines. The nature of my work means I am relying on other people. I have a lot of developers wanting everything faster than I can give it and limited resources. My assurances take the shape of "I am aiming for.." or "I hope to.." or "the current anticipated timeframe is.." Very rarely do I say: I will definitely do this by the time you need it.

Feeling rather dejected by my thoughts, yet seeing the faint light ahead that is Friday afternoon; I opened my bible on Friday morning to Psalm 37. There I saw words, promises, phrases, and verbs that made me sit up straighter and smile; that put backbone in my day; that gave a purpose to the day and a way to carry it out.

Here are promises we can stake our days, our feeble efforts, our lives on. Phrases like: helps us, delivers us, upholds us. Though we stumble he will not let us slip. He will uphold us with his right hand. Make firm our steps. Doesn't that make you walk more surely through your days? My steps don't

But God does say that. All the time.

Firm Steps

always feel firm. Sometimes they are faltering, weak, meandering. The path is slippery, the way is treacherous. Here is an image of us taking tentative steps down a slope, and we stumble; quicker than we know it, God has reached out, grabbed our arm, and pulled us upright. We may feel like we have fallen, but we haven't, because we are God's righteous children.

But what does it mean to be righteous? The term righteous is scattered through the bible like stars in a clear night sky. How do we act righteous? How do we live as righteous people? Our righteousness is imputed to us through Jesus. What does righteous mean to live by it? Righteousness is credited to us by faith. Faith and righteousness go hand in hand. How do we make our hearts and hands move in harmony with them?

Psalm 37 points the way. Faith in God is not a passive, warm fuzzy feeling. It's active. it's conscious. it's committed. Psalm 37 spells out to us what it means to live by faith, to grow in righteousness.

Delight. Commit. Hope. Seek peace. Do good. Take refuge in him. Terms that give direction to our intentions, to our actions, to how we trust in God.

The words that resonated with me on Friday morning were "Be still before the Lord and wait patiently for him; do not fret when people succeed in their ways" I was fretting about my lengthy task list, about people pressing me for results. I felt myself slipping.

I was getting carried away by the minutiae of the day ahead. I was worrying; instead of trusting God and waiting patiently for him to do what he will with my day. I need to do the best I can, and trust God. Why am I fretting? Whatever happens, God will uphold me, and I will still be his when I close my eyes at night.

Friday was not productive, or efficient. I spent hours bogged down in detail that did not matter. I became frustrated and impatient, and urged myself not to be. I went outside and looked at the flowers which helped; I delighted in the Lord who had made them. I helped two colleagues resolve their problems. I chatted with a friend and we sought peace by laughing together. Later I watched Grease; I felt old and reflected on wasted years. This led me to reflect on what a gift my current years are with Jesus, how I am so glad he called me back to him. The current difficult days are but a nanosecond, compared to eternity with our Lord.

Friday was a day to reach out to people, to reflect on the grace of God. It was a day to trust in the Lord, to commit to him, to follow his way, to delight in him. This is what I long to do, every day. Often I feel myself stumbling and slipping. I reach for my stronghold, my Lord.

Friday was a day for the Lord to uphold me, to love me, to make firm my steps, to deliver me, to bless me.

My Lord, my stronghold, I take refuge in You.

would have been a terrifying experience. They saw the mountain on fire and the presence of God was hidden from them by a dark cloud. Who would want to approach that?

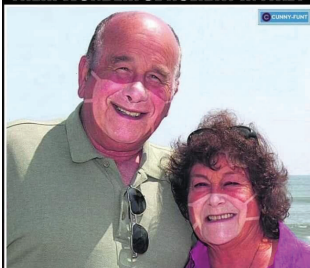
But we have come to the Heavenly city, a city with the sound of a festive gathering. That is the joy of being a Christian, Jesus changes everything! We don't hear a terrifying voice from which we want to run, instead through the Spirit, the Father serenades us with His Word. I once heard a Christian say that if the logo of Christianity wasn't a cross, it would've been an ear. Christians listen

attentively to God's Word, and respond by worshipping acceptably.

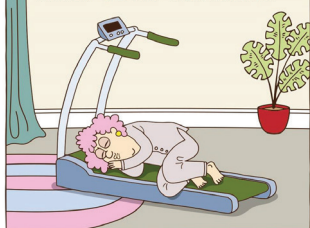
This means we do not live as the world lives; we don't sleep around or drink excessively. We stand for the truth and righteousness even when it costs us. Jesus changes everything. Though we live in a city of excesses and evil, Christians have come to the heavenly city, which causes us to live differently to those around us. Christian lives should be the contrast to our world's excesses and evils. And so we live knowing God has prepared a better city for His people. This is the acceptable worship God seeks from us, are we listening attentively?

COVID Memes

TED AND MARCIA JUST BACK FROM THEIR WONDERFUL HOLIDAY IN ITALY



MY DOCTOR SAID I SHOULD SPEND AT LEAST AN HOUR A DAY ON MY TREADMILL.



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Find-A-Word

Approach	Deliver	Hear	Stumble
Change	Different	Heavenly	Terrify
Christian	Efficient	Passive	Uphold
Commit	Excess	People	Worship
Credit	Feeling	Problem	
Current	Fret	Serenade	
Delight	Harmony	Steps	

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PRAYER POINTS



- Pray that righteousness will be amongst the leaders of our society. Pray that they will allow churches to worship our creator as He has called us to do.
- Pray that people will listen to the government. But also that the government will listen to its people as they think about lifting restrictions.