

## Pastor's Blog No. 12 for Monday, March 18, 2024

**Weathering the Storm**

It was quite a busy time last week, with the tornados and all. It's amazing how weather events can quickly change the whole course of your life and your outlook on it too. Communities around us got hit hard, especially Winchester to the east of us. It was the most nervous I've been about the weather since a tornado tore through Crandall, Indiana where I pastored years ago.

Susan and I actually took shelter in the concrete block restrooms of Calvary for a short period when it looked like the worst was actually going to happen. But it passed quickly, leaving no damage. So much has been said and seen about the tornados of Indiana, Ohio, and Kentucky last Thursday night that I've not going to go into details. Besides what I do mostly on my Monday Blog is talk about how I feel. It may or may not minister to you, but it's kind of like therapy for me.

That being said, what affected me most (and I still can't shake it) is the total destruction of Freedom Life Church in Winchester. For one, I've seen it's progress over the years—sometimes hard won progress. I closely know its former pastor, Jeff Bullard, who invested almost 20 years of his life and family in the church and community, working tirelessly to bring Freedom Life into a new generation of believers.

**New Beginnings**

Last February a new pastor came to Freedom Life, full of hope and expectation. Easter of last year their church was packed with believers expecting even greater things. Many of them had been there for years and invested much time and labor to create a beautiful facility in which to worship the Lord and serve his purpose in Winchester. Not to mention all the memories of multiple moves of God, salvations, and miracles that have taken place in that church.

However, it can all be swept away in a moment. The new pastor, Matt Holloway, wasted no time in setting up the next Sunday service in the Winchester Community Center, clearing all the debris from the property, posting online the bright future ahead of them, and reassuring all the people of Freedom Life that the best is yet to come.

**Why Me?**

Then here I sit. I don't know why it has affected me so deeply. Partly it is because I hate to see someone's greatest efforts suddenly wiped away. Also, I have a hard time letting go of former plans and embracing the reality before me. I need to take the example of pastor Matt as he leads his people through the days, months, and years ahead. He is the man of God for the hour they face. I stand with him in the only way I can—in prayer, for him, his wife Courtney, their children, and their congregation. Winchester needs this church.

I will watch and pray for them as they walk through this season together. I will also learn from the example they set. They can truly relate to all the suffering around them of the people who have lost homes and businesses. Thankfully, no one lost their life. The compassion this church has for the community comes from the compassion God is pouring out on them right now.

*"Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ,  
the Father of compassion and the God of all comfort,  
who comforts us in all our troubles, so that we can comfort those  
in any trouble with the comfort we ourselves receive from God."*

2nd Corinthians 1:3, 4 NIV

### **It's Not About Me**

Although I am still a little shaken by their trial right now, maybe it's God working in me to not forget to pray for them over the long haul. Many decisions need to be made, many obstacles need to be overcome, and many doubts and questions need to be squashed under the revelation that God is for them and working through them. He will guide them into an even greater destiny in the coming season ahead—a time of rebuilding and recommitting once again to be his church in his time.

Me? I'll get over it. I've got struggles of my own, and soon they will once again consume my mind and energy. But for a moment my heart and mind embrace the church at Winchester with prayer. May you do likewise for them, and anyone you know who has suffered through this storm. Also the Church of Christ just across highway 27 needs your prayers too for the same reason, as so many do across the region.

Our God is the God of all comfort!

Until next Monday, may the Lord bless you! Pray for us!

Pastor Brian Jenkins

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