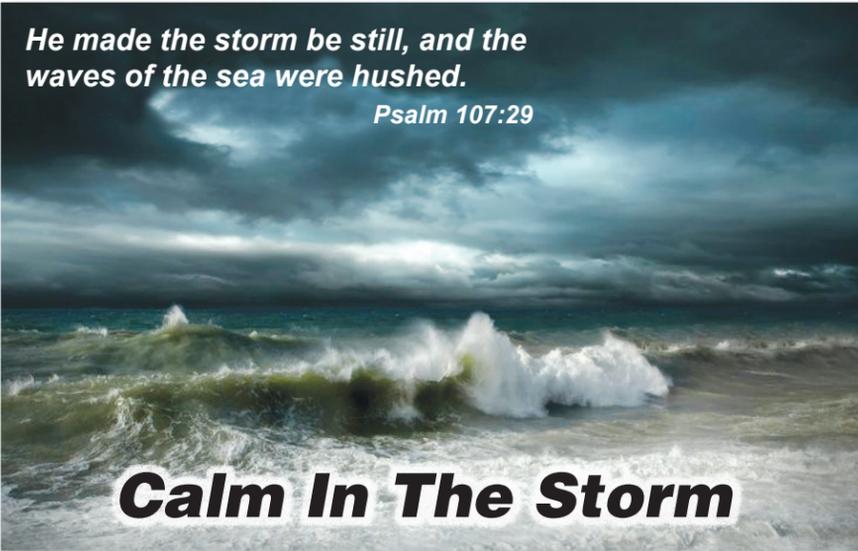


He made the storm be still, and the waves of the sea were hushed.

Psalm 107:29



Calm In The Storm

Ok, I'm going to toot our own horn for once. As you may know, I struggle with what to put in this space each week. I'm tired of all of the negative stuff, but I feel a real obligation to counter the Fake News of the mainstream media (MSM) and to inform and remind us all of what's really happening, and that ain't pretty. Thus what appears to be negative too much of the time.

Why not just ignore it? It's tempting because it appears to be the easier thing to do, but I don't believe that God wants us to ignore it. Too much is at stake – our very souls and what choices we make for or against eternity with Him. Again, this can appear to be negative, when in fact, it is joyous news that we have an escape hatch from all of the negative ugliness! That is, if we so choose and commit our lives and wills to God.

Anyway, this week I've been beating on God's door, asking what I could put here that isn't so stinking negative and depressing. He finally answered me with the instruction to look all around me, at all of the positivity we get to experience here in Lucerne Valley. Not only the beautiful desert with its various critters, unique plants and my favorite, the Joshua trees, gorgeous sunrises and sunsets, and the silence most of the time (when bulk cement trucks aren't roaring through), but also the unique people and personal relationships and small businesses here to serve us.

Yes, I mean the one and only Lucerne Valley Market & Hardware, among several others. I don't often directly brag about this store, because it seems foolish, especially when you realize how many mistakes we make in serving customers, whether in the Deli Café or at the checkstands or in one of the departments. As soon as I say how wonderful we are, we will make some major blunder and deeply offend someone.

OK, we are human and imperfect (duh!), and it's never without the downside. But it's good to appreciate the upside, which in my opinion is a major positive to help offset so much negative. What is it that is so positive?

- It's old, maybe a little shabby, but comfortable, and there is a whole different feel in this store compared to the average market, hardware, or big box store. Our feel is warmth, light, reliability, as in WE ARE HERE FOR YOU AND WE WILL STAY HERE FOR YOU, as long as we can do it physically and in this anti-business climate. (Yes, I know that some of the new, younger staffers aren't as friendly as we would like them to be, and there are many of them in this difficult hiring environment, so we have to try to train into them concern for the customers, a smiling greeting, and a genuine "thank you" from them.)

- We try to have stuff. As we walk the aisles and look at the ugly empty voids in certain areas, we cringe at the absence of items that you may want and can no longer get. We spend hours per week trying to

\$1 credit toward an ebook or video, oh isn't that wonderful?!?! The back door opens, the poor Post Office lady brings in 15 BIG, HEAVY boxes that were crammed into her car, I get the call from Carrie, the receiver, and down I go to open and check in all of those boxes containing pet food, some medicines, and other assorted supplies. Ugh! As soon as I'm done and have returned to my desk, another ring of the bell brings in six BIG, HEAVY Walmart boxes so that I must repeat the process. Yes, I'm glad to be able to do that so that there is at least a reasonable selection of pet food on the shelves, but it is so time consuming to do that! Sir William also spends significant time looking for stuff to fill unfillable holes!

- I cannot say enough about our wonderful staffers, for the most part, as there are a few curmudgeonly characters among us! And then we all have our curmudgeonly days now and then. This has to be one of the best groups of people anywhere, all of us with our faults but overwhelmingly kind, good-spirited, and dedicated to doing the best job they can for all of us customers. There is so much complexity involved in the various services we offer, whether Money Orders, taking bill payments, participating in the Stihl small engine power tool exchange, or the various menu items in the Deli Café. That complexity generates complaints at times, and the staffers have to sort through it all, keeping a positive attitude and hopefully turning the customer's experience into a good one. I so appreciate the staffers God sends to us and I hope that we help to grow into them an awareness of being chosen by Him for this mission of service to this little desert town.

- The store, like it or not, provides this town with a solid, stable core, making it a viable and desirable place to live. Without it, there would be many, many more (now expensive) trips to town for basic stuff. We understand when people go to town for what they perceive to be lower prices, and we do struggle with that issue since independents are not given the same lower pricing that the chains get. But we charge as little as we can and still keep this place going and of service to you.

- We provide a place in our center for a coin laundry, a doctor, and the bank. All of them are first class and save you time and inconvenience if you choose to use their services.

I apologize for the above, except that I don't. I know this store is unusual – more personal, more servicing, mostly well-kept, and certainly calm in the storm of chaos all around us – and it's a surprise to outsiders to find it "way out here". So hopefully this is a little bit of good news in a time of almost all bad news! And maybe you might get a taste or whiff of God's Spirit when you are in here. We sure hope so!

Linda Gimmel

find substitute items or substitute suppliers like Amazon and Walmart (another cringe to have to support those two!). I dread Tuesdays and Fridays because they are our "Amazon Day!" – smiley face, aren't we lucky that we just got a

Freedom! No Longer Slaves

Ray Bentley Ministries



FOREVER IN OUR HEARTS
We honor Pastor Ray's life by continuing to share the daily devotions he prepared for you, his precious readers.

"I am the Lord your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, that you should not be their slaves; I have broken the bands of your yoke and made you walk upright." — Leviticus 26:13

"FREEDOM!" cried a dying William Wallace in the movie Braveheart.

Freedom is a battle cry, a longing of the heart, a cause and belief to fight for, die for, and celebrate. Freedom is a gift.

Nine times in the book of Leviticus God reminded His people how He delivered them from Egypt. After 400 years in captivity, slavery had become a mindset, a learned, generational way of life.

Young ones learned from their elders, Never lift your head or make eye contact. Never be yourself or speak your mind. If you do, you will suffer consequences.

After Moses pleaded, "let my people go," over and over, on the night called Passover, freedom won. In one night God delivered them. But their mentality, the way they viewed life, the way they thought of themselves—that would take time. To realize they were elevated to being God's chosen people, the sons and daughters of the Almighty – that's a radical change of life and thinking.

We also live in a slave mentality. A slave to habits and broken lives, slaves to past wounds, slaves to our flesh or the false peace the world offers. It takes time for your mind to start thinking like a free person.

Salvation takes a moment, but sanctification takes a lifetime.

I encourage you to step into your true identity. Embrace the fact that you are God's precious child, His son or daughter. Until we realize who we really are, we miss so much. Grow in your knowledge and understanding of the Lord, until you can walk in the power and authority of your true identity.

The Jews asked Jesus how He dared to promise freedom.

He answered, *"Whoever commits sin is a slave of sin. And a slave does not abide in the house forever, but a son abides forever. Therefore if the Son makes you free, you shall be free indeed"* (John 8:34-36).

A child of God abides forever, free. We are no longer slaves.



Planned Chaos

(From an e-mail buddy)



If you leave the gate open, the cow will wander off. So if you intentionally leave the gate open, you want the cow to wander off. You can't blame stupidity or laziness. It was intentional.

If you cut police budgets, you will get more crime on the streets. So if you intentionally cut police budgets, you wanted more crime on the streets.

If you cut back the supply of oil, gas prices will go up. So if you intentionally cut back the supply of oil, you wanted gas prices to go up.

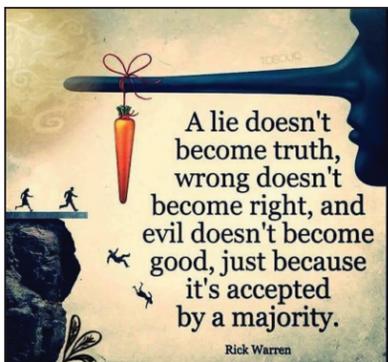
If you print trillions of dollars without increasing the supply of goods, inflation will hit hard. So if you intentionally print trillions of dollars without more goods you wanted inflation to hit hard.

If you leave the southern border wide open, you get more drug trafficking and human trafficking. So if you intentionally leave the border wide open, you wanted more drug trafficking and human trafficking.

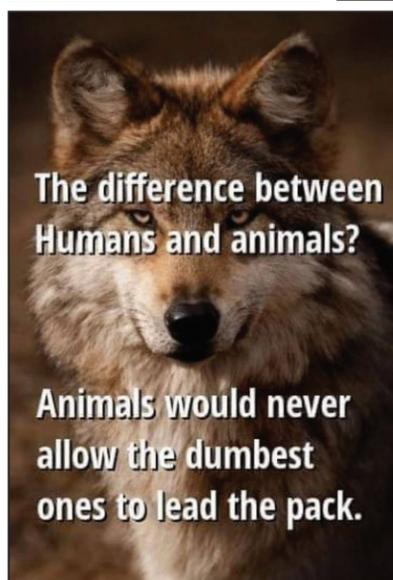
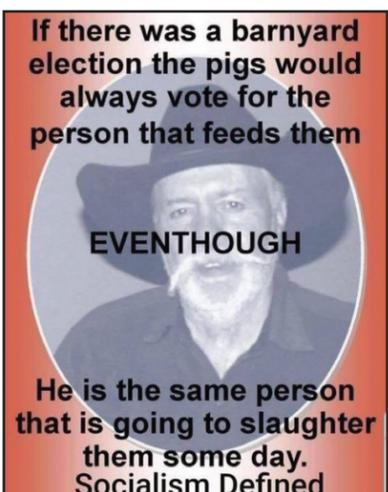
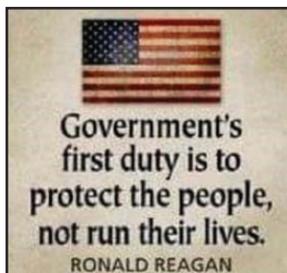
If you shut down 40% of the supply of baby formula in February, you'll get a huge shortage. When you KNOW a huge baby formula shortage is coming because of the FDA's actions, and you purposefully do nothing to prevent it, month after month, until the crisis finally hits hard, you INTENDED this crisis.

It is time to recognize the evil people behind that old man. They want crisis. They want chaos. They want riots. They want conflicts in your town. Their stated purpose years ago with Obama was to "take the US down a few notches on the world stage." You can feel the quality of your life going down with the country. These are not foolish or misguided people. They are headed somewhere you don't want to go...

On The Lighter Side . . . Contributed from the Web



THE REAL THREAT TO YOUR FREEDOM IS NOT FROM MEN HIDING IN CAVES IN THE MIDDLE EAST WEARING TURBANS. IT'S FROM MEN WEARING SUITS AND TIES IN WASHINGTON D.C.



I'm old enough to remember when mentally ill people were put in hospitals, not Congress.