

Just a Minute..

1 Peter 3:8 "But do not forget this one thing, dear friends: with the Lord a day is like a thousand years, and a thousand years are like a day."



I have always been a firm believer that the Lord reveals Himself to those who are desperate for Him, not those who simply seek an experience of Him. Pentecost came to those who hungered after the Kingdom, His glory and His will – nothing more and nothing less.

But the glorious day of Pentecost presented a new challenge to the disciples. Personal ambitions now had to be transferred into Kingdom aspirations. Time had to make way for eternity. What had mattered before, politically and religiously, now had to be turned into a new understanding and an eternal purpose. Perceptions had to change, and the disciples realised that receiving the Holy Spirit had little to do

with them and everything to do with God and being His witnesses. The Holy Spirit was embraced as One who equipped for use and not as an ornament to display.

But the greatest transformation of Pentecost came as it turned time into eternity. Finally, God ignited eternity in the hearts of man, which was promised since the beginning of time (Ecclesiastes 3:11). The suffering the disciples would endure was now seen in the context of eternity and not in the capsule of time. That's why, time and time again, Paul could refer to the joy and hope set before them (Hebrews 6:18) and Peter could refer to his suffering as only "a moment in time" (1 Peter 1:6).

And this was one of the lessons we learnt during our recent visit to Syria. We found believers who live with their eyes on eternity and who are not imprisoned in the moment of suffering. We found a Church that has learnt to embody the truth that Moses proclaimed (recorded in Psalm 90:4) and Peter confirmed (1 Peter 3:8) – that "with the Lord a day is like a thousand years, and a thousand years are like a day." They understood the deep Pentecostal truth that if you have eternity in mind, you have enough, even though an eight-year war might have taken everything from you.

We entered Syria with an expectation of meeting fellow believers who were mourning the devastating consequences of the eight-year war. But what we found was believers who had 'transformed time into eternity'.

1 Peter 3:8 teaches us that between a day and a thousand years there might be some proportion, but between time and eternity there is none. How glorious therefore to know that ...

- If one day equals 1,000 years in time, then in the context of eternity, the eight years of unspeakable suffering in Syria was less than 12 minutes long. This does not reduce the suffering of the present, but it multiplies the joy of eternity.
- If one day equals 1,000 years in time, then in the context of eternity, every day of suffering would equal 1,000 years of joy with Christ. This does not make the present day easier but provides an eternal hope that makes every suffering bearable.
- If one day equals 1,000 years in time, then in the context of eternity, it means the Lord keeps record of our suffering as if it happened yesterday. Nothing will be forgotten, nothing will be missed, and nothing will be omitted.
- If one day equals 1,000 years in time, then in the context of eternity, time on earth is little more than a speck in God's vast eternity and everlasting goodness, and suffering is only for a moment in time.
- If one day equals 1,000 years in time, then in the context of eternity, we will have all the time in the world to find the peace that was lacking, the pain that was accumulated, the joy that was lost and the suffering that was endured.

Our sovereign Creator has no beginning, nor will He ever end. But our earthly time is finite, and each moment is written in God's eternal book. This principle of 'timeless living' reveals to us that while we are caught in the 'trap of time' (in the limiting borders of hours, days and years), God is found in eternity, embracing the moment – the measureless now,

that lasts beyond the restrictions of time. This is the reason for Pentecost: an agenda that focuses on eternity and not the search for present fulfillment.

Acts 1:8-11 "But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be My witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.' After He said this, He was taken up before their very eyes, and a cloud hid Him from their sight. They were looking intently up into the sky as He was going, when suddenly two men dressed in white stood beside them. 'Men of Galilee,' they said, 'why do you stand here looking into the sky? This same Jesus, who has been taken from you into heaven, will come back in the same way you have seen Him go into heaven'."