

Dear Supporters,

I write this year's letter just simply trying to catch my breath and get it done in time. In truth, I find myself not knowing what to say. I can just hear some of you who know me well laughing at that thought, but I do find myself speechless in many ways because 2016 is simply a blur! We have spent the year trying to keep up with *Shaqah*, the calendar project, and not a whole lot of anything else has been able to be accomplished beyond the bare necessities of keeping the organization running. Is this a bad thing? Only because I always pray we can do more, and I feel so bad for those who are still waiting on things such as Q&As. However, we can not forget that the "more" I wish to do is relative. I would like to produce far more new materials and better organize some of the older stuff, but the more for this year has truly come in the increasing numbers of people ordering the materials we have. This is certainly nothing to be disappointed about as we are reaching more people in more places than ever!

That being said, I do want to apologize again this year for those who have not gotten some of the teaching you have specifically requested. As I said last year, we are not just letting things go, and moving on. It is still my intent, Lord willing, to get things out as I/we can get to each item. It is our great honor in life to send teaching materials to all those who would ask for them, and it makes my heart ache that I have not been able to keep up with everything. However, all this is, once again, something only God knows what the reasons for are. One of the main reasons this last year had been a blur for me is that my health, while better than it was a couple of years ago, may not have been quite as good as I thought it was a year ago. In the end, I may have pushed just a little too hard to catch up, and lost some ground on the slow and steady wins the race truth. I'm just going to be honest and plainly say, not just myself but others who actually do the work of this ministry, have struggled!

None of this is to say we have been without blessings, and I wish to make no excuse for what God has allowed us to do, along with what He has not. The new printer I talked about in last year's letter has been a blessing beyond what we could have thought at the time we got it. It has been nothing short of God providing a necessity just as it became one! With the volume of *Shaqahs* and calendars that are produced at this point, there is simply no way we could hope to have kept up without a machine of at least the capacity of this new one. It has also kept us from having to depend on outside sources for certain printing, and God has blessed us with some new suppliers for some of the materials we need. All this has enabled us to do more on demand without having to constantly go to someone else and wait on them to get the work done and/or do it right. We simply could not do what we now do without what God has provided this past year; and this is just evidence God still wants us to continue what we are doing, for He has made a way to get it done.

With that, I could talk as I normally do about things such as the website, etc., but this year I feel compelled to stay on the subject of how we all serve God. We all should know that we serve a great God Who, if He so desires, can do anything and make everything possible, but the truth we see is that He does not. With this, we must never forget that the choices we all make have a lot to do with what does and does not happen as God waits on us to both listen and respond to Him. Simply put, we live in a world that is rejecting the right and calling evil good more and more. (Isa. 5:20) As true believers, we have all seen the persecution the Word of God has told us will be directed our way, increase. However, as much as we say we knew/know this would come, some days I believe we don't appreciate how much the reality eats at us, and there is an overall effect that, if we allow it, does suppress true believers in unnecessary ways. This happens even if the attacks we know about are not so personally directed at us as individuals or the organization(s) we are connected to. The real reason

we need to be aware is not for the sake of feeling sorry for ourselves, and it certainly is not so we can blame God for not doing more to defend us! This is why Jesus told us to look at His example. After all the good He had done, this world put Him on a cross to die. In these days we live, what might be more important to keep forefront in our minds is that God allowed it and Jesus was willing to endure it!

This is the true reason to be aware of the persecution as it comes. We need to recognize it for what it is, and understand that we live more today in a reality we have always talked about. What we cannot do, if we want to be found worthy before God, is forget that even if this persecution rises to the point it takes our life, we have suffered no more than God Himself was willing to give to save this world! If God is willing, then so should we be. We can hope and pray for many things, but in the end we must accept what God allows because we often have a vision of what our life and/or ministry should look like, but only what God actually wants from us matters. He knows better than we do about all things. Job could never have imagined that his trial of suffering would mean so much to so many for so long. We still read about his faithfulness and are inspired to this day to reach for the faith he had. The one thing God told Job he did fail on was that, Job wished if he had to ever go through such a thing, he would never have been born. We don't know a lot about what else Job may have done in his life or what it meant to those around him, but we know the story of the time period where he went through the suffering that caused him to make this wish. It was this incident that had long-lasting impact for the kingdom of God. We just never know what or how our lives will factor into God's plan, so we must always follow the instruction David gave in Psalms 37:5 where we are told, "Commit thy way unto the LORD; trust also in him; and he shall bring it to pass."

What will God bring to pass? That's the point, we don't know. All we know is that we must stay committed to Him no matter what the cost. I feel these are the only words I truly have for this last year and is the way we enter 2017. In the end, what is the turning of a calendar from one year to the next? Time goes on and we must continue to do our utmost in this ministry work God has entrusted to us, allowing God to bring to pass what He wills. I will close by saying all I can say to each of you is, thank you for being a part of Living Springs. If you have been part of the actual physical work, thank you! If you have donated, even the smallest amount, thank you! If you have spent time in prayer for this ministry, thank you! If you can look back and say you have grown in your walk with The Lord over this last year and the materials Living Springs has produced was even a small part of that, thank you! It is for this purpose and this purpose alone that we do what we do, so thank you to all of you who have taken part in this ministry, and may God bless each and everyone as you continue to seek to grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. Shalom!

Sincerely,



Philip E. Busby
Executive Director
Living Springs
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