

## *Fanning it into Flame*

Sunday, May 16, 2010

### Preparation

Rev. Roy Olsen, my good friend of nearly 30 years, brought the message today on how God prepares us through our circumstances. Out of the most difficult time in his life culminating in tendering his resignation of the church where he was the founding pastor twenty years earlier, Roy launched a ministry in Romania called **Apa Vie**, translated Living Water. He says that he was born for this ministry. He never imagined that God would use him in reaching the people of the most impoverished country in Europe. When he left his church in New York Roy moved to Virginia Beach and lived with his sister's family. While attending her church he did what he could do to move forward believing that God could do something with his life. He went on a couple of mission's trips, Romania being one of them. He developed relationships with Christian leaders in Romania and found an incredible open door for ministry. Roy took his meager retirement account and purchased the house and property that is now Apa Vie and renovated it to become a retreat and conference center.

**Romans 8:28 And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose.** (KJV) When we are going through hard times it can be difficult to imagine that any good can come out of it, yet that is exactly what God says. He uses the things we go through to build in us the very characteristics that are going to be needed for the plans God has for us. **Ephesians 2:10 For we are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.** (NIV) He does have a plan for us and is preparing us for it.

The life of David beautifully illustrates this very principle in **1 Samuel 16**. The prophet Samuel was told by God to anoint the new king to replace Saul. After Jesse had seven of his sons pass before Samuel, the prophet asked if that was all the sons he had. Jesse mentions that he did have another son, but he was out tending the sheep. Apparently it had never occurred to Jesse that David was even in the running, yet he was the one God had chosen. Man looks at the outer appearance, but God looks at the heart.

Sometime later Israel was at war with the Philistines who had a champion named Goliath who was a giant. David shows up to bring some food and asks about the battle. He tells King Saul that he can take care of that giant and mentioned that he killed a lion and a bear while protecting the sheep. Apparently he also learned how to handle a sling as well. King Saul was willing to give him a shot, but told him to put on his armor. David couldn't function with it and ended up using what he was comfortable with. You can't use someone else's armor! God equipped David with what he needed for that battle. He was also equipped with the Spirit of the Living God. He developed a relationship with God that grew into his being called by God, **"a man after my own heart."**

Although man might not have seen the potential David had, God did. He worked in David's circumstances to make him into the man who would change history. God has done a similar thing in Roy's life and wants to do it in yours. Are you in a hard place? Have you questioned why you're going through what you're going through? Have you considered that your future is going to require the lessons you are learning through the trials you're facing? Be encouraged. God says in **Jeremiah 29:11 "For I know the plans I have for you," declares the LORD, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future."** (NIV)