We have had an unusual spring and summer here in Tulsa, with storms producing strong winds, rain with golf ball size hail, and flooding. Because of so much moisture, 30 year old trees were uprooted. Limbs were broken and ripped off and electrical lines were strewn across streets. Roofs and guttering are now being replaced all over the city.

While too much rain can be destructive, rain can also produce wonderful crops.

Years ago when my husband was attending Seminary, we lived in north central Oklahoma in a small wheat farming community. The farmers had planted the seed and the wheat was coming up, but they were very concerned because rain was needed. Without rain the wheat would produce low crops or even be lost.

After church on a Wednesday night, one of our board members told my husband how bad things looked. My husband explained that God was interested in his crop and asked if he had prayed for rain, and he admitted he had not. My husband prayed with him, asking for rain. He also encouraged him to continue to pray and believe God.

When the farmer arrived home he stood outside and looked up at the stars, with not a cloud in sight. He said, “God, that crazy young preacher believes you can send rain and I’m asking also. Please send rain so we won’t lose our crops. Amen”

Early the next morning my husband was up at 5:00 a.m. preparing for a funeral when he heard thunder. He turned the TV on and heard the weather forecaster saying, “No rain was in the forecast, but up north farmers are getting a wonderful rain on their wheat crops.” In a few weeks a bumper crop was harvested!

I believe that it is harvest time and we should believe God for a bumper crop!
Do you know where the term “bumper crop” comes from? If you think it is like “bumper cars,” only using tractors, you would be mistaken. Neither does it pertain to billiard tables in the barn.

When corn was picked by hand, wagons drove slowly alongside the harvest crew. As pickers plucked the ripe ears, without looking they threw them in the direction of the wagon. Farmers mounted extra high sideboards on their wagons to keep the corn from flying over the opposite side. These were known as bumpers.

Later, extra sideboards (bumpers) were added to increase the capacity of the wagons. Bumper crops are too large for a regular wagon or truck to hold; they need bumpers to contain the bounty.

I know that many covenant keepers are discouraged and weary. Who would have believed the high prices we are paying for gasoline? As the price of groceries goes up weekly, it is easy to get into fear and begin to speak like the world. “We can’t afford that.” “I don’t see how I can tithe anymore.” “I can’t even consider going to the conference.” “I can’t afford to put gasoline in the car.”

Many have been standing for a long time and we need a bumper crop in our marriages, finances and other relationships and situations.

Hebrews 10:35-36 says, “Therefore, do not throw away your confidence, which has a great reward. For you have need of endurance, so that when you have done the will of God, you may receive what was promised.” NAS

The Living Bible says it this way, “Do not let this happy trust in the Lord die away, no matter what happens. Remember your reward! You need to keep on patiently doing God’s will if you want him to do for you all that he has promised.”

We must not let weariness and discouragement keep us from reaping our rewards. We must watch what we say and speak God’s promises, not what the world says. Gal 3:3 “Are you so foolish? Having begun with the Spirit, are you now ending with the flesh?” RSV

We have sown the seed for our miracles but we need rain for a harvest. Prayer, intercession and faith in God and His Word will water the seeds we have planted. Let’s believe God for a bumper crop!
As Covenant Keepers, we are fighting a spiritual battle whose casualties are eternal in nature. Therefore, the purpose behind this conflict is of epic proportions, for it is not merely the determining of a country’s border or ruling party but rather the eternal resting place of human souls. It is with this in mind that we consider some principles gleaned from King David’s men of valor. The narrative we shall consider is located in 2 Sam 23:8-17, and reads as follows:

“These are the names of the mighty men whom David had: Josheb-basshebeth a Tahchemonite, chief of the captains, he was called Adino the Eznite, because of eight hundred slain by him at one time; and after him was Eleazar the son of Dodo the Ahohite, one of the three mighty men with David when they defied the Philistines who were gathered there to battle and the men of Israel had withdrawn. He arose and struck the Philistines until his hand was weary and clung to the sword, and the LORD brought about a great victory that day; and the people returned after him only to strip the slain.

Now after him was Shammah the son of Agee a Hararite. And the Philistines were gathered into a troop where there was a plot of ground full of lentils, and the people fled from the Philistines. But he took his stand in the midst of the plot, defended it and struck the Philistines; and the LORD brought about a great victory.

Then three of the thirty chief men went down and came to David in the harvest time to the cave of Adullam, while the troop of the Philistines was camping in the valley of Rephaim. David was then in the stronghold, while the garrison of the Philistines was then in Bethlehem. David had a craving

and said, “Oh that someone would give me water to drink from the well of Bethlehem which is by the gate!” So the three mighty men broke through the camp of the Philistines, and drew water from the well of Bethlehem which was by the gate, and took it and brought it to David. Nevertheless he would not drink it, but poured it out to the LORD: and he said, “Be it far from me, O LORD, that I should do this. Shall I drink the blood of the men who went in jeopardy of their lives?” Therefore he would not drink it. These things the three mighty men did.”

There are three characteristics displayed by these three men of valor. The first centers on Eleazer who “arose and struck the Philistines until his hand was weary and clung to the sword, and the LORD brought about a great victory that day”. (Verse 10) The word for clung is the same word for cleave found in Genesis 2, where a man should leave his father and mother and cleave to his wife. The man or woman of valor must cleave; become indistinguishable with; become one with the Word of God, which is the Sword of the Spirit. We may get weary from the battle but we never drop our sword. We hide the Word in our hearts that we might not sin against God. (Psalm 119:11) The fight might look as if it is being lost, but we hold on to the promises of God and fight through the weariness and pain until the Lord brings about a great victory.

To be a man or woman of valor we must keep the Bible as our source of inspiration and life. When situations become difficult, usually the first thing that ceases is our time with the Father. We get stressed and weary so we stop the one thing that will change the situation by feeding our spirits. Cleave to the Word and its promises, for therein is your hope.
The second characteristic of a person of valor was they stood their ground. Everyone of the Israel army fled before the Philistines except for Shammah, "But he took his stand in the midst of the plot, defended it and struck the Philistines; and the LORD brought about a great victory." (Vs. 12) He stood his ground against all odds. A choice has to be made. A line in the sand has to be drawn. The devil can only do to the believer that which the believer allows. I have a friend in Africa whose brother complained to him that their uncle took his land and small house. The brother asked what he should do. They sought my counsel and my response was, "Take it back!" No one can take advantage of you unless you allow them to do so. The devil can attack, he can appear to win, and he can send well-meaning souls to encourage you to give up. But the victory is yours as long as you stand your ground. Stand firm therefore. (Eph 6:14)

The final characteristic learned from this narrative is to fight through the enemy for the desires of the Father. David was resting above the village of Bethlehem and lamented, "Oh that someone would give me water to drink from the well of Bethlehem which is by the gate!" (Vs.15) The three mighty men of valor, at the hearing of the Kings desire, went and fought through the Philistines to fetch water for the King. They were so committed to do the will of the King, they were willing to risk their lives for a drink of water.

Are we committed to the Kingdom of God to the point that His every bidding becomes our desire? We allow our fears, our special circumstances, the economy, the government, our retirement plans, our children or family to keep us from doing the will of the Father. In Luke 9:57-62 we read:

“As they were going along the road, someone said to Him, “I will follow You wherever You go.” And Jesus said to him, “The foxes have holes and the birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay His head.” And He said to another, "Follow Me." But he said, "Lord, permit me first to go and bury my father." But He said to him, "Allow the dead to bury their own dead; but as for you, go and proclaim everywhere the kingdom of God." Another also said, "I will follow You, Lord; but first permit me to say good-bye to those at home." But Jesus said to him, "No one, after putting his hand to the plow and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God."

If Father asks us to do something and we say "yes" and then add a "but" or other conditional phrase, we are not as committed to Him as we let on. This is why there are so few men and women of valor. Jesus commands us to take up our cross and follow Him, but we respond that we must first do “such and such.” We are cowards. To be a man or woman of valor we must reach the place in our souls where He is everything and we are nothing. We must have the spiritual integrity to not simply say “yes” to the things we enjoy doing or that are comfortable to us. We must literally be at the Lord’s beckoning.

“Send me, use me, work through me Lord this day and forever.”

In Memory
A gift was received from a Tennessee covenant keeper in memory of Theresa Nadeau’s father

"Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of His saints." Ps 116:15
We all desire that God’s standard for marriage be upheld and honored. Just the other day, I had a new covenant keeper speak about the fact that people did not support her stand, and how this grieved her. Many of us have experienced the same thing and perhaps feel powerless to change it. We want to take matters into our own hands and point out to others the error of their thinking.

In the booklet “Holding Up God’s Standard For Marriage”, Marilyn Conrad points out the importance of checking our motives. Often our motives are wrong because we are still hurting. When we see someone who is not standing for his or her marriage, we feel hurt and insecure. Perhaps we subconsciously think, “If they would agree with me, I would feel more secure in my stand”. Or, do we feel we are better than they?

I heard a story of a pastor and elder talking about confronting a member of the church concerning his adultery. The pastor asked the elder, “Could you ever commit adultery?” The elder replied “Oh no, of course not.” The pastor then suggested that the elder was not the person to confront someone else of adultery.

We all need to be humbly aware of our human frailty. Jesus reminds us in Matthew 7:4, “How can you say to your brother, ‘let me take that speck out of your eye’ when all the time there is a plank in your own eye?” The trouble is, when there is a plank in our eye, often we do not recognize it.

BE HONEST

How can we take the plank out of our eye? Firstly, we need to be aware of our thoughts and feelings, and that healing takes time. We need to face our pain head on, pouring out our feelings of hurt and anger to God. We may need to do this over and over. Psalms 6 and 13 are good examples of the psalmist being honest with God about how he is feeling.

WORD FROM GOD

Secondly, we need to know that God has spoken to us personally about keeping our marriage vows and trust Him for the outcome. If we can be strong in this, it does not matter what others think or believe. If we are not certain about God’s call to keep our covenant, we need to seek Him on this.

KNOW GOD’S COVENANT

Thirdly, we need to study God’s Word in relation to covenant marriage, divorce and remarriage. We need to understand deep in our hearts what God’s covenant nature is like. I recommend Craig Hill’s books “Help My Spouse Wants Out” and “Marriage: Covenant or Contract”. But, most of all, I recommend studying scripture to discover God’s covenant love for you personally.

When we are healed we are better able to hold up God’s standard for marriage. To talk about our stand to others too soon will only expose to them our pain. They will not see the growth and maturity we would like them to. If we have been a covenant keeper for many years, it’s wise not to be complacent about our own attitudes. Jesus said in Matt 5:16, “In the same way let your light shine before men that they may see your good deeds, and praise you Father in heaven.” My paraphrase is “Let your maturity, shown by a humble and gentle spirit and strong faith, (which is a result of your healing) so shine, that people will see your faithfulness (to your marriage vows) and so praise your Father in heaven.”

William Barclay says in his study on 2 Timothy: “The history of the Christian church teaches us one thing; falsity can not live. It may flourish for a time, but when it is exposed to the light of truth it is bound to shrivel and die. There is only one test for falsity, ‘by their fruits you shall know them.’ The best way to overcome and to banish the false is to live in such a way that the beauty and the loveliness and the graciousness of the truth is plain for all to see. The defeat of error depends, not on skill in controversy, but in the demonstration in life of the more excellent way.”

1 Corinthians 13 tells what that excellent way is. If we endeavor with God’s help, to put this into practice from our hearts, then, I believe, we will be holding up God’s standard for marriage. (The Message Translation)
Covenant Moments From Around The World

TOGETHER AGAIN!

Florida: CK has been married 23 years, divorced 3 years and remarried 1 year – happily! "Thank you for the support."

Illinois: "On June 7, 2008 My husband and I remarried! Just wanted this news to be an encouragement."

Texas: "I don’t have time to go into details but praise the Lord, my wife and I have been together for a year now. I really needed someone and God lead me to you all. I’m helping a couple out and he is now returning to his wife after a 6 month separation and near divorce. Ironically he is paying $2,000 to stop his divorce! May God richly bless this wonderful ministry!"

Australia

New South Wales: Husband asked CK to minister to non-covenant wife and her mother, who is terminally ill.

Husband gave CK a new car for her birthday.
CK’s husband blessed their daughter with a new laptop.
Husband took part in a family photo for the first time in ages.
Queensland: CK and wife are planning to renew their vows.
Wife sought CK’s advice before getting some pet dogs.
CK struggled at seeing her husband with the non-covenant woman, and has recently received fresh revelation to set a Christian example through her stand.
CK, her husband and children have enjoyed several dinners together.
CK’s husband is softening towards their daughter and he is keen to have her visit.

South Auckland: CK was able to pray with their children for his wife and her non-covenant partner.
CK was blessed by a text message from husband.
Husband gave a gift to CK. They are getting along well.

Australia’s Conference

Breakthrough National Conference
21st to 23rd of November
Colloroy Centre
Homestead Avenue
Colloroy Beach, Sydney

Malaysia

Recently on the birthday of CK’s husband, her daughter asked for coins to call her father so she could wish him a happy birthday. At the end of the conversation CK’s husband told their daughter to hug and kiss CK for him.
CK’s daughter had a bout of rashes and insisted CK bring her to the hospital where her father worked. CK asked the Lord for his grace as she would have to face her husband and the 3rd party there. She was able to greet them in a civil manner.

CK heard from her family that her husband has been going to church recently.

Whilst between jobs, CK has been able to spend a lot of time doing gardening and house repairs and reading and spending time with the Lord in solitude. He has found it has been very healing and feels better and fitter. He has also had time to reflect about his children and wife.

NEW ZEALAND

Auckland: God gave CK an awesome Mother’s Day. Her husband came over and they had tea & coffee together. Later her sons took her out to dinner.

Hamilton: CK’s husband texts her every evening to say “good night.”

NEW ZEALAND NATIONAL CONFERENCE

November 7-9, 2008
El Rancho Retreat Centre
Waikanae (North of Wellington)

UNITED STATES

California: CK had a good conversation with her mate.

CK has received two calls from his wife.

CK’s wife called to apologize for not having their daughter call him. She also asked if she could help him with his trip to come see them in July.

Florida: CK sent her husband a birthday card with a gift certificate to his favorite restaurant. He called her two days before his birthday and she accepted his invitation to go with him to that restaurant.

Georgia: CK’s wife actually enjoyed the first session with their new Christian marriage counselor. She had initially not wanted to go.

Indiana: CK’s wife and the non-covenant are fighting. She is saying she wants to get a divorce from him.

CK’s daughter told him that her mom said she was better off with CK than she is now.

Oklahoma: CK’s son and his wife went to a second session with a marriage counselor.

CK’s husband called on their 50th wedding anniversary. She asked him if he knew what happened 50 years ago. He said, “Oh, it’s our anniversary.” He then wished her a happy anniversary!

CK’s husband is honoring her more than ever.

CK and daughters spent father’s day with his parents; they went to church, out to lunch and water skiing. The daughter who has been somewhat estranged from the family joined them and had a wonderful time.

CK spent time with children on father’s day and his wife cooked some food which she sent to him.

Texas: CK’s wife declared she is open to reconciling – especially for the sake of the children.
IN LOVING MEMORY
BY Kay Martin

Marilyn Pennington (group leader in Atlanta) sent this letter to share with all the Covenant Keepers. Used by permission. Kay fulfilled her vows, “Until death do us part.”

My dearest Marilyn,

I came to know you at your home in 2006 at the Yellow Ribbon Day and then at the Atlanta retreat last year.

On Good Friday, my husband, John, (a doctor) had some severe neurological symptoms. He was at a meeting in Tennessee and he had a friend drive him home. He was diagnosed with lung cancer that had metastasized to the brain, adrenalinis, liver, etc.

He phoned me and apologized with great shame. I told him I was on my way. In minutes his heart was set straight with the Father.

They began him on chemo and he was hospitalized until his birthday on the 15th of April, when he came home. The chemo was terrible. He became infected within 24 hours of being home and we had to rush him back to the hospital. He died early Monday morning with all of us around him.

Amazingly, these were wonderful days and he felt he had to tell me and the children over and over how much he regretted his choices in the last three years with the affair, etc. We had lived apart those years but talked daily and had breakfast several days a week. (He was never public with the other woman.)

I stayed at the hospital with him and I was so grateful for his salvation. We loved sharing about the Lord. We looked forward to this time, except he was concerned about who he was when he was no longer “doctor.”

The newspaper did a feature article on him because they were so deluged with people phoning and writing in over his death. They never do features on physicians dying.

It is so much better, knowing that he is one with God and in heaven, than all these years of praying and longing for his soul to be saved.

I appreciate you and Covenant Keepers and I am convinced you were a critical part of what God used to keep me on His track for this long stand.

Loving you in God,

Kay Martin
WHEN YOU THOUGHT I WASN’T LOOKING
By Mary Rita Schilke Korzan

A message every adult should read because children are watching you and doing as you do, not as you say.

When you thought I wasn’t looking
You hung my first painting on the refrigerator
And I wanted to paint another.

When you thought I wasn’t looking
You fed a stray cat
And I thought it was good to be kind to animals.

When you thought I wasn’t looking
You baked a birthday cake just for me
And I knew that little things were special things.

When you thought I wasn’t looking
You said a prayer
And I believed there was a God that I could always talk to.

When you thought I wasn’t looking
You kissed me good-night
And I felt loved.

When you thought I wasn’t looking
I saw tears come from your eyes
And I learned that sometimes things hurt
But that it’s alright to cry.

LITTLE EYES SEE A LOT. Each of us (parent, grandparent, aunt, uncle, teacher & friend) influences the life of a child. How will you touch the life of someone today?

Mary Rita Schilke Korzan ©1980
(Used by permission)
Look What God Is Doing….

Australia

New South Wales: CK received healing and is feeling closer to the Lord.

CK’s son is taking an interest in God and the Bible.

Canada

Saskatchewan: CK knows a couple who had been separated for 20 years. The wife recently called and said she wanted to get back together. They are planning a cruise together.

Malaysia

The younger daughter of CK was selected by her school to take part in an inter-school moot (mock) trial. CK was asked to coach her daughter and her team. This coincided with a major event in her church that took a lot of CK’s time. By the grace of God she was able to assist in organizing the healing crusade and make time for her daughter and team. CK’s daughter did well in the moot. Her elder daughter wrote and told their dad who commended both of them.

New Zealand

Auckland: CK praises God for some extra work so that now she can do some house maintenance.

United States

Virginia: After requesting prayer for a night job so she could still care for her mother during the day. CK received a call-back from her previous employer with an offer of a night job. God is meeting her needs!

Oklahoma: CK’s daughter has had 50% of her time with her daughter restored by the court.

Pennsylvania: CK had an opportunity to witness about covenant to his pastor.

South Carolina: “I just wanted to call and give a testimony of what God has done in my life. I have been under very severe attacks for the last two weeks against standing for my family and my marriage. When I was on my way to work in the morning, I thought there was no other choice but for my husband and I to be separated and to get a divorce. By the evening, my mind was back on being a firm stander for my family. I can’t help but believe that it was the prayers of the CK group for all of us that I got my mind back on track. I just thank you so very much for all the sacrifice and the prayers that you are giving for each one of us. I thank you, and I thank God.”

WE GET MAIL

ZIMBABWE

The place we used to meet in the city centre has been converted into offices, so we have moved to a house.

I thank God for the group in Oregon. The transport money they sent is really going a long way to bless people and to make it easy for them to attend. The Lord had gone ahead of us! By June our attendance could have sunken low because costs for everything are rising on a daily basis.

What a blessing it is, that CK’s give during these trying times!

Luke 6:38: “Give, and it shall be given unto you; good measure, pressed down, and shaken together, and running over, shall men give into your bosom.” KJV