



GUIDELINES DAILY COMMENTARY ON LIVING WITH DR. HAROLD J. SALA

Subject: Faith/Crisis

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DISASTER OR OPPORTUNITY?

Unless the Lord builds the house, its builders labor in vain. Psalm 127:1

Most people called it, "An absolute disaster!" But Bill Eaton called it "an adventure!" It all started following several weeks of drenching rain when California took on the appearance of an Asian monsoon! The rains finally softened the earth beneath Bill and Lee Eaton's family home, and a massive hole began to swallow up their 4 bedroom house which had been home for 23 years. That home was full of memories, too. Here their family grew up. Christmases and birthdays, a wedding and scores of good memories were all associated with the pale green house.

To make matters worse, a wrecking crew got the wrong address and punched several massive holes in a roof before they discovered they were tearing down the wrong house.

Yet Bill said, "It's not a disaster; it's an adventure!" Talk about optimism! And how did Lee feel? She was with Bill. "It looks ominous to me right now," she said, adding, "But it's not an impossible situation."

How do people stay so positive when insurance won't cover the loss, and they were not exactly rich? Bill and Lee Eaton were not the average sort of people. They had an optimism born of faith. I know because for a number of years this gracious gentleman, an accountant by profession, helped scores of people with their problems, including our staff at Guidelines, often without taking anything in return.

Naturally, Bill and Lee weren't exactly joyful when a city building inspector condemned their house as unsafe. They had to pick up what they could and gingerly moved out, careful not to make too much noise or create too much stress for the rickety house. Even as they packed, they felt the house moving under their feet.

What would be a disaster to some was a challenge, an opportunity to Bill and Lee Eaton! As I heard about the Eatons' positive optimism, I remembered that the Chinese character for "crisis" is a combination of two other characters which mean "danger" and "opportunity"!

There is an optimism born of faith when you understand that there is more to life than just what you see. Long ago, Paul spoke of this, saying, "For our light and momentary troubles are achieving for us an eternal glory that far outweighs them all. So we fix our eyes not on what is seen, but on what is unseen. For what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal" (2 Corinthians 4:17-18).

Years ago, I stood outside a burning home. Flames were coming out the doors and windows as a young couple stood watching, obviously overwrought with grief, having lost everything they had. The mother was sobbing, and the dad was wringing his hands. I arrived, hoping to help, just as the father, a young man in his late 20s, was saying, "My God, everything we have is lost!" A little girl, about four or five reached up and took the hand of her daddy and said, "Not everything's lost, Daddy; you got Mommy and me!"

Frankly, everybody doesn't handle trouble like Bill and Lee Eaton, but then Bill and Lee had something going for them which some folks don't have--a positive faith in God that affects their value system. They realized there are some things more important than just a house. You see, their home survived the destruction of the house. They knew that the Psalmist was right when he wrote, "Unless the Lord builds the house, its builders labor in vain" (Psalm 127:1).

With faith in God we see that which is invisible, and it takes us beyond our losses. That's the stuff that helped Bill and Lee Eaton rebuild the house which was their home.

Resource reading: Hebrews 11, Psalm 127.