

A Fortress of Silver and Cedar

With numerical growth in church; new believers, backsliders, and those that have been around, we must be reminded that **WE ALL have the responsibility to support, love, disciple and nourish each other.**

I feel that God is bringing us into accountability to each other. Also, He is bringing unity and dependency upon each other.

There are those that are not comfortable with becoming vulnerable to others so God has a way of placing us into position that we need each other! Churches ONLY grow when the BODY grows together, and depend on each member to help!

WE have responsibility to mentor youth, NEW BABES and those that struggle (CARE leaders). (***we must move out of comfort zone, reach to those not in our circles...***)

WE MUST REACH, NOURISH, FEED, LOVE, ENCOURAGE, STRENGTHEN AND MINISTER...

Song of Solomon 8:8-9

8 We have a little sister, and she hath no breasts: what shall we do for our sister in the day when she shall be spoken for?

9 If she be a wall, we will build upon her a palace of silver: and if she be a door, we will inclose her with boards of cedar.

Introduction: Wildebeests, a type of African antelopes also known as gnus, migrate yearly in huge herds to the plains of Tanzania's Serengeti to mate and to birth their young. Also on the Serengeti Plain roam vicious predators, including the hyena. In this hostile setting, a newborn wildebeest has about 15 minutes to get up and run with the adult herd. Slow starters risk becoming hyena lunch.

A documentary (Discovery Channel) showed film of a wildebeest giving birth on the Serengeti. Her baby barely had time to get used to breathing when the mother nudged it to get it standing. Picture the newborn on wobbly hind legs with its forelegs still bent underneath its bobbing head. Between the mother's nudging the baby's inexperience, the newborn is worn out after five minutes of repeated attempts to stand.

Then the camera picks up a hyena approaching stiff-legged with lowered head and slightly bared teeth. The mother wildebeest bravely steps between the hyena and the baby, but another hyena appears, followed closely by a third. The mother lunges at the newcomer. Although it backs away, another skulks in closer to the helpless infant. Before long a circle of hyenas occupies the mother wildebeest while other hyenas eat the baby.

Meanwhile, spread out nearby, literally thousands of other wildebeest graze, now and then lifting their heads to watch the desperate mother attempt to fight off the hyenas. Any of them could easily help save the newborn, but not a single one does. It must be our pledge to each other to stick together! Fight for each other, back each other, pray for each other, encourage each other!

I. We have been adopted into the family of God?

A. Paul said **Romans 8:15** *For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father.*

1. No longer slaves to fear! No longer in bondage but purchased and brought out!

a. **Rom 8:15-16 15** *For [the Spirit which] you have now received [is] not a spirit of slavery to put you once more in bondage to fear, but you have received the Spirit of adoption [the Spirit producing sonship] in [the bliss of] which we cry, Abba (Father)! Father!*

1) **16** *The Spirit Himself [thus] testifies together with our own spirit, [assuring us] that we are children of God.*

AMP

- a) **Rom 8:16 16** *God's Spirit touches our spirits and confirms who we really are. We know who he is, and we know who we are: Father and children.*

THE MESSAGE

- 2. We received **adoption** – the placing as a son.
 - a. We became his sons when we received Him.
 - 1) **John 1:12** *But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name*
 - 2) **1 John 3:1** *Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God :*
 - b. He loves us and He has adopted us!
 - 1) **NO identity CRISIS!**
 - 3. We are **in the family of God!** Adopted by our Father, Jesus Christ.
- B. Family members stick together! We need each other. You can't make it alone!

- 1. The creator of the universe was wise enough see and know that; **Gen 2:18** *And the LORD God said, It is not good that the man should be alone;*
 - a. **He made a help meet for Adam.**
 - b. **Gen 2:18 18** *Now the Lord God said, It is not good (sufficient, satisfactory) that the man should be alone; I will make him a helper meet (suitable, adapted, complementary) for him.*

AMP

- 2. **Eccl 4:9-12 9** *Two are better than one; because they have a good reward for their labour. 10 For if they fall, the one*

will lift up his fellow: but woe to him that is alone when he falleth; for he hath not another to help him up.

- a. When one falls, we have a responsibility to help, pick them back up!
 - 1) **Eccl 4:9-10** *9 two are better than one, because they have a good [more satisfying] reward for their labor; 10 For if they fall, the one will lift up his fellow. But woe to him who is alone when he falls and has not another to lift him up!* **AMP**
 - a) Two are better than one, they have good reward for labor!
 - 2) God uses people working together;
 - a) **Acts 13:2** *As they ministered to the Lord, and fasted, the Holy Ghost said, Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them.*
- 3. Woe to the one who goes alone. We ALL need another.
 - a. **Eccl 4:11-12** *11 Again, if two lie together, then they have heat: but how can one be warm alone? 12 And if one prevail against him, two shall withstand him; and a threefold cord is not quickly broken.*
 - b. Work together, pray together, worship together, fight together, grow together, mourn together, rejoice together...
- 4. We encourage, comfort and build up the body of Christ! **1**
Thess 5:11 *Wherefore comfort yourselves together, and edify one another, ...*

C. Song of **Solomon 8.**

1. Solomon says; Gathered with her family and the wedding guests in her mother's cottage, the bride said to her brothers, when I was a little girl, you said that you were going to protect me!
 - a. They said that if she was: **a wall** – they would build upon her a palace of silver or if she was **a door** – they would enclose her with boards/panels of cedar. ...
 - b. Solomon describes a young sister that was developing. Still maturing, growing up. He said that she would be either one of two things; a wall or a door.

2. **A wall** – *stands firm, steadfast, strong, strength.*
 - a. **NLT** says “*if she is chaste*”, pure, not loose, righteous.
 - 1) She was strong, not moving, she had a standard, she was a support for others ...
 - b. This fortress-wall shall be crowned as it were with a tower or battlement of silver.

3. **A door** – *moveable, even though closed it can be opened again.*
 - a. Easy in Yielding, weak...
 - 1) **NLT** says, “*promiscuous*”
 - b. Translated a – **gate**.
 - 1) Where **people can come and go**.
 - c. We will build around her wall of cedar.

4. She could be something strong or something weak!
 - a. She represents you; either a wall or a door!
 - 1) We all are either walls or doors!
 - b. WE decide what we are, and people know it too.
ARE YOU A WALL OR A DOOR? WE NEED WALLS, BARRICADES, STRENGTH, STANDARDS!

D. **Her brothers were going to build her up!** Help to protect her!
We have a responsibility to build on both!

1. **If she be a wall** – “***we will build upon her a palace of silver***”!
 - a. Means **a fortress**.
 - 1) **NLT** – ***we will strengthen and encourage her!***
 - b. **SILVER** – symbol of holiness, righteousness.
 - 1) **BUILD ON THE STRENGTH THAT IS THERE!!!!**
 - 2) Not tear down the wall, not beat on it, **but built on it a FORTRESS** w/encouragement, prayers, blessing, words!
2. If someone is strong, don't try to tear them down, but encourage them. **Don't discourage! Get out the silver and build a fortress!** (the body, brothers and sisters need it)

E. **If she be a door** – “***we will inclose her with boards of cedar***”.

1. **inclose** – shut in, secure, enclose, besiege,...
 - a. **TO FORTIFY!**
 - b. We will build a wall, bring security, shut her in, **FORTIFY** her, we are building a fortress around her!
2. **Psalms 92:12-13** *12 The righteous shall flourish like the palm tree: he shall grow like a cedar in Lebanon. 13 Those that be planted in the house of the LORD shall flourish in the courts of our God.*
3. **Cedar** – to be firm, have deep roots.
 - a. The cedar is a divine favorite.
 - b. **King Hiram, leader of the nation of Tyre,** contributed the **cedars that went into Solomon's temple**.
 - 1) They came from the mountains of Lebanon.
These huge, strong cedars were what provided

the underpinnings, framing, and rafters of the great temple.

- 2) These **strong cedars were not seen by the eyes once the Temple was completed**, yet they existed just the same.
 - a) They served as **the inward bracings for the outward pressures**.
 - b) There must be that same contribution in the lives of men of God.

i. THIS IS WHAT WE ARE TO DO!

4. The cedars are spoken of by: Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Amos, Zephaniah, and Zechariah. Multiple times are cedars mentioned in the Psalms. Perhaps they are mentioned so much because **it's characteristics are to be desired and esteemed by righteous men**. Wide-branched, heaven-aspiring, and tempest-grappling are these huge trees.
 - a. **They grow in unlikely conditions.**
 - 1) The cedars of Lebanon grew in the most unlikely of conditions. Coming from **the mountains of Lebanon made them bear the most extreme of weather conditions**.
 - a) Tyre is a coastal city on the Mediterranean Sea. Therefore, **the summer brought it's humidity and it's storms**.
 - b) Not just the occasional thunderstorm but the **hurricanes that have their tendencies to spin off** vast destruction in the Mediterranean Sea.
 - 2) When winter began to set in, the cedar had to forge its way through the heavy snows that came to rest on its wide branches.
 - 3) In addition to the storms and the snow, it was at **six thousand feet above sea level which is**

the highest level that vegetation can be found.

b. The Cedar Has Deep Roots.

1) -The cedar rises to its greatest height at **60-80 feet tall.**

a) **Because of its great height, it's roots have to probe the depths of the earth.**

b) They reach and stretch to find the rivers under the earth. Roots reaching down through the caverns of the mountains and tapping into the very foundation of the earth.

c. Hardness and durability...

1) Cedar used to preserve precious things/cedar chest.

2) **Cedars do not grow in mild climates**, in soft-air, nor in well-watered gardens.

Midnight storms, cold winters, and dry summers only cause the cedar to flourish.

d. A highly prized wood.

1) Its oil used

a) for preserving parchments and garments.

b) has antiseptic properties!

c) A wood that is durable, not porous, smells good...

5. Enclosing the door with a wall of cedar was preserving, strengthening and building up!

a. We must enclose those that may be a door! WE must enclose with cedar!

1) **No seducer (devil, world, etc...) can get close to him or her!**

b. **Get around the door/gate and enclose and fortify with righteousness, blessings!**

c. GET SOME CEDAR! BUILD A WALL OF CEDAR!!!!

1) **WHO will say**; I will fight for you, pray for you, strengthen you, encourage you, bless you, agree with you, worship with you, dance with you, witness with you AND GO TO HEAVEN WITH YOU!

d. **If someone is**

1) **a wall, build a palace of silver!**

2) **a door, let's built a wall around them.**

Closing:

Why didn't we join hands the first day?

Several years ago now Reader's Digest printed the tragic story of a missing little girl in the Atlanta area. In an effort to locate her, the local authorities were joined by the National Guard.

For three days in the cold winter air, they searched in every conceivable place, but to no avail. **Finally, on the 3rd day** someone came up with the idea that a nearby field should be walked with **all the law enforcement officials joining hands**.

Within a relatively short period they found the little girl. The mother was called and grabbed up the limp body of her little girl. Weeping she kissed and caressed the lifeless form. After a few moments, she looked through her tear filled eyes at all the men standing around and said, ***"why didn't we join hands the first day? My baby would be alive if we had joined hands on the first day!"***

WE WILL BUILD A FORTRESS OF SILVER AND CEDAR!