



October 8, 2009

Dear Friends,

The past couple weeks, God has reminded me what a lifelong journey recovery really is. I left September 20<sup>th</sup> for a long anticipated, archery elk hunt in the mountains of southern Colorado. It was my first time to chase elk outside New Mexico where I'm from so my expectations were much lower than usual. However, I still had great anticipation for a week in the mountains with God and a couple good friends.

Unfortunately, the trip and my subsequent return has been a reminder that we have an enemy who seeks to "kill, steal and destroy." I don't have enough time or space to detail half of what went wrong but I will summarize it with a few key phrases: Major oil leak, snow, broken tent pole, snow, a mountain devoid of all game animals, snow and by the way, did I mention cold, wet, nasty snow. Then while driving home, I learned my wife for whom I left a day early with the hope of reconnecting with was sick and mostly wanted and needed sleep. The final straw was hearing there was no money in the church account for my October 1<sup>st</sup> paycheck. This came at an especially difficult time as we have been trying to sell our house since March and we still have no offers, only a few lookers and our reserves are completely gone.

CS Lewis, in *The Problem of Pain*, said pain was "God's megaphone to rouse a deaf world." Well, needless to say, I was sufficiently roused. However, I much preferred my sleeping state of denial and was none too happy about the rude awakening. I shut down; I wrestled with God; I fought with my wife and snapped at my kids; I even bought a DQ Blizzard and enjoyed it immensely for about five minutes until the pain came back. Everything within me wanted to run and demand God, my wife and others fix my problem ASAP!!!!

God seemed distant, unavailable and withholding. Intellectually, I know better; intellectually, I know the messages I hear about Him not coming through for me are Satan's lies, but in the moment, they feel so true.

Now if you brought this to me in a counseling session, I would automatically look for unhealed pain from your past. I would ask you to think about when you felt these things before. I would likely try leading you in an Immanuel prayer session asking Jesus where this lie comes from. But that's you, not me. Sometimes knowing what I know can be a royal pain in the neck. Sometimes I'd rather just wallow in the pain of my circumstances and in the cesspool of Satan's lies than to do the hard work of recovery. Thankfully, however, I've learned there is a better way. So I argued with God, and I saw my counselor.

As I described my pain, several things came into clarity. First, when I said, "I feel like I'm under attack," she reminded me that things are starting to move forward in significant ways. My manuals are literally beginning to go around the world, speaking opportunities are increasing and traffic on our websites has picked up as more and more people are discovering the wealth of resources (especially audio) available for free. God is widening the impact of New Hope in amazing ways. I remembered something I tell people all the time: "Satan actively opposes all movement towards freedom." The fact things are especially hard right now has to be—at least on some levels—a positive sign and we must take measures to protect and counter his attacks.

While recognizing the attack is critical, even more important is the question, "What is God up to?" He is always at work even in the midst of Satan's dastardly deeds. Think of the cross: Satan and his minions had to be celebrating like never before. They had God's son nailed to a cross: a victory beyond their wildest dreams. Yet scripture is clear. God called every shot. Jesus died exactly how, when and where God wanted him to. He suffered well and, as the result of his sacrifice, purchased our redemption. God is always at work, even in the midst of Satan's schemes. So, what could God possibly be trying to show us through these struggles?

Well, I'm still processing and still asking Him questions, but I have found a significant wound going back to my childhood. When I was very young, we lived on the edge of poverty until my father started a business. He experienced great success and suddenly we had money. We moved to a fairly nice house but in many ways continued to live like we were poor. I remember in Jr. High looking at my friends in disbelief because their

parents spent \$40 on Nike tennis shoes when you could get a pair of cheap ones for \$8. Of course one irony was that I had some serious feet problems and if anyone needed good shoes, it was probably me. However, the thought of even asking for such “luxuries” was unthinkable.

My parents both worked long hours in the business and we spent money on “important things,” meaning things my father valued. However, their physical and emotional unavailability combined with not spending money on things I valued created a fertile soil for Satan’s lies of “You aren’t worth much” and “You just have to get by on your own.” This lie continued in college as I drove my truck for about a month with a dead battery. (It was a standard so I worked really hard in West Texas to always park someplace with enough of a hill I could push start it easily.) I wouldn’t call home and ask for money because all through high school I heard my father complain about how older my sister always needed more. It was easier to park on a hill and pop the clutch then to ask for what I needed. So I waited until I could buy it myself.

Can you see the lies? Can you see how directly Satan points them back to my heavenly Father when the funds are not here? After all, “God owns everything. If he chose to, he could fund NHF to the point we could hire additional staff, fix up the bathrooms and etc. On a personal front, we wouldn’t need to downsize our home and instead of scraping to buy new tires for old vehicles we could buy new ones. But no, God is too busy and what you do isn’t significant enough for that kind of care.”

I hate Satan! Even his lies have twists. Notice he doesn’t say, “You aren’t significant enough for that kind of care.” No, he even uses his lies to enforce other lies. Many times I have looked at what I do and said, “God, you have to fund this, what we do is incredibly valuable and very, very few people are willing to go into the messes we go into with people.” Yet, do you see subtle twist. It still points to God’s provision coming as the result of our work being “significant enough.”

I’ve realized this week that even writing letters like this describing our journey and our needs feels like “begging” to me--and I made a vow in adolescence to never to beg. My Father knows what I need, if He really loves me, if I really have value to him, He will provide. Yet as I process through the pain, I’m beginning to realize he withholds his provision not because he doesn’t love me, not because I am not worthy, but to bring Satan’s lies to the surface. My God is a loving, engaged, heavenly father who always cares for my heart, even if it means using his megaphone of pain to help me see what is most important and what needs his healing touch. It isn’t fun, but it is transformational and part of the recovery journey.

You may be asking yourself, “How can I help?” Well, first and most importantly, we need your prayers. Our battle is not against flesh and blood or even financial balances. Our battle is against an enemy who lies, cheats and does whatever he can to “steal, kill and destroy.” There isn’t enough money available to counter Satan’s attacks. What we need most are individuals who will stand in the gap by praying specifically for us. In one sense this is something everyone reading this letter can do and we value each of your prayers. However, we also know God calls some individuals to the ministry of intercessory prayer and we are looking to establish a “prayer team” that would pray consistently for us. If this is something you sense God calling you to be part of, please call or email me as we hope to put this team in place in the very near future.

Second, of course you can give financially to New Hope. Many of you already give in sacrificial ways that continually amaze us, and I can’t begin to tell you how grateful we are for your gifts. Some of you may just now have become aware of our needs. Often, when people first join our ministry they are not able to see past the pain of their current circumstance to see how they can be part of our support base. However, if everyone who attends groups and/or receives counseling who isn’t already part of our support base gave \$50 or \$100 per month, we wouldn’t be in this place. If remembering to give is difficult, you can also set up automatic, recurring donations at [www.NewHope4si.com](http://www.NewHope4si.com) using your checking account or credit card.

Third, you can tell others about our ministry. We have many partners now because someone told someone else what God has done through New Hope in their lives.

Thank you for all your prayers and financial support! Thanks for being part of the community of New Hope!

Because of the resurrection,



Darrell Brazell