

RANSOMED  
HEART  
ministries

November 2008

Dear Friends,

By the time you get this letter, the elections will have come to a climax. Our country will have set a course for the next four years. And I'm not a financial analyst, but it's probably safe to say the markets will still be unstable. It all adds up to a lot of uncertainty. Maybe I can offer a few thoughts to help you navigate.

First, a confession – I've been battling the roller coaster of fear and uncertainty, as I'm sure you have. When the market first plunged, I was so embarrassed to see how it affected me. Within moments I knew this is going to be a test for me of how I handle uncertainty, how much of my actual confidence is resting in God – and how much is not. To see college savings suddenly disappearing, to watch close friends lose their retirement, to see the unbelievable foolishness of the American public when it comes to politics – it has been unnerving. I know I'm not alone in that.

I've felt a little foolish for being so vulnerable to the daily news. I mean good grief – don't I believe in a sovereign God? My, how subtle the shift takes place, as we lose sight of the eternal and come to put our hope in what is at hand. And so this ongoing disruption can be for us an incredible opportunity, an *invitation*, to be honest about where our hopes and fears really do lie, and to turn to God in a much deeper way.

One of the reasons I appreciate the Psalms so much is how utterly honest they are. In Psalm 21 David is elated, rejoicing in the goodness of God:

O Lord, the king rejoices in your strength.  
How great is his joy in the victory you give!

One passage later, in Psalm 22, he is in the pit of despair:

My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?  
Why are you so far from saving me...?

It cracks me up. And it provides a place for my own emotional rollercoaster. It reassures me that I can bring all that to God, all that I am feeling, however much it skyrockets and plummets. This is Step One: Bring it all to God. Because the *temptation* in uncertain times is to scramble. Scramble to figure out what to do. How do I protect myself? Where do I hide my nest egg? Should we pull out whatever we have left, and bury it in the back yard? That scrambling is so utterly godless, and unwise. First, I have to come to God, in order to get my bearings. I need to start here:

*Lord, this is what I'm feeling. This is what I'm fearing. What are you saying to me?*

And I need to wait long enough to hear his words.

I need his assurance. There is just no other reliable source.

Let it be a discipline *not* to follow the daily reports. That is a sort of spiritual fasting, a turning away from what you think will provide you with guidance or assurance or warning, so that you can turn to the One who knows what you need to hear, and what you need to do.

(By the way, can I remind you that The News is something that is sold in our country no differently than cars or coffee. Television, newspapers, radio, Internet sources are competing against one another for your attention – that is how they make their living. And so they have to *sell* you the news. They have to make today's report grab you. The News is not the news; it is a competition for your emotions.)

I need God's assurance, his perspective. And, I need his counsel on what to do. Now, more than ever, we need to hear what God is saying to us. So that is Step Two: Ask God what to do.

*Lord, what would you have me do?*

And stay with the question, however long it takes for you to know you have heard from him. When it comes to big decisions and emotional issues, I find it takes days and weeks for me to get clarity. Stay with God until you have clarity.

In fact, if you haven't read *Walking with God*, now would be the time. AND, we are so excited about a small group DVD for *Walking with God* we've just released. Grab a few friends, and take a few weeks to walk together learning to hear God's voice more intimately, seeking his counsel for your life. This is such a ripe time for the Church to turn to God, and learn to follow his voice. Help a few folks to do that. It could be one of the richest things you've ever done.

Okay, so Step One, we need God's assurance. We need to let him speak into the turmoil. Let him frame our perspective on the times. Step Two, we need to ask God what to do. Now, more than ever, we need to know what his counsel is to us, personally. We need to listen for his voice. This has helped me a great deal in the past two months.

One last thought: This is the time of year that every non profit you have ever heard of (and a few you haven't) will be sending you appeals for support. The answer is no different – ask God. *Lord, what would you have me do?* Ransomed Heart is a movement supported by a fairly small group of people who know we are changing the world. We, too, are asking for your support. But we want to do it in the spirit of, *Lord, what would you have me do?*, and not play upon your emotions like we're trying to sell you something. Walk with God. Include us in your prayers. And we'll trust him with what he says to you.

I hope you have a wonderful Thanksgiving.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be the name 'John' written in a cursive, flowing style.

John

p.s. We want to help you share the message of freedom, life and hope with your friends this holiday season. From now until December 12th, we will be offering FREE SHIPPING on ALL orders placed at [www.ransomedheart.com](http://www.ransomedheart.com). Please check this out and other holiday promotions on the website.